PRIMA'S OFFICIAL STRATEGY GUIDE

CRUCIAL ADVICE FOR EQUIPPING YOUR 'MECHS®!

MECHCOMMANDER™ GOLD

Joe Grant Bell
Susan De Cicco

PRIMA® GAMES

MICROPROSE

MechCommander™ Gold

Prima's Official Strategy Guide

Joe Grant Bell

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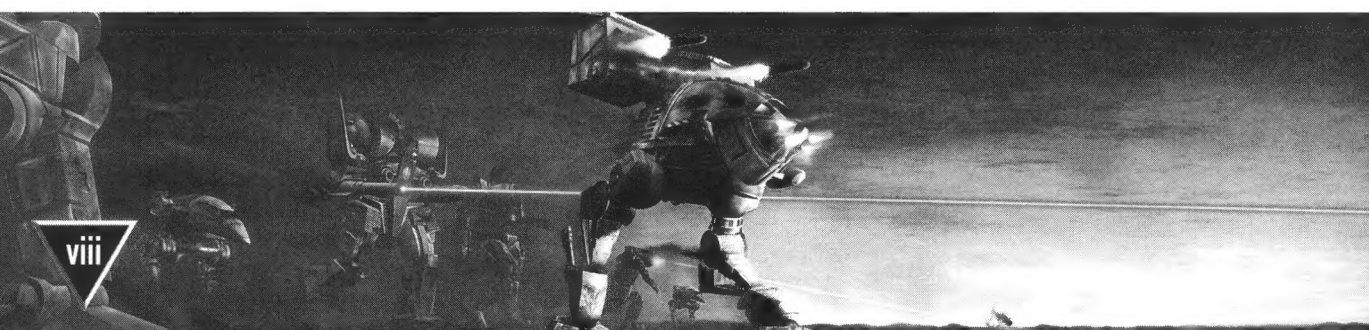

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Foreword

A message from Victor Davion, Co-Leader of the Clan Counter Invasion Forces:

> *"The twilight of the Clans is at hand. You, your fellow MechCommanders, and the MechWarriors you lead have dealt the Smoke Jaguar Clan a fatal blow. Starting with the retaking of Port Arthur and continuing to the final challenge on Strata Mechty, each of you has demonstrated the strength, determination, and ingenuity that defines humanity in every military action in which you've participated. In many ways, our strongest weapon has been your creativity; each of you figured out how to not only deal with, but also soundly defeat, enemy forces of superior numbers armed with superior technology.*
>
> *"Thus, it is with great pleasure and even greater pride that I hereby order you to return to your homes and relax within them, knowing that it's what you did here that has made them once again secure."*

A message from Colonel Reese, Commanding Officer of the 1st Davion Guards:

> *"As much as I hate to disagree with Prince Davion, I am rescinding those orders. I am sorry to say that your odyssey is not yet over. Zulu Company is hereby ordered to move to the planet Cermak and await my further orders."*

Thus begins another adventure for Zulu Company and the MechWarriors that serve within it.

Desperate Measures takes Zulu Company back into the fray against a Clan commander unlike any they have encountered before.

The original *MechCommander* provided a unique perspective into the BattleTech Universe, a perspective that was both more removed and more immersing. That point of view provided the commander a more holistic view of the battle and made it possible to focus on the larger tactical issues of concentration of firepower and the maneuvering of large numbers of units. It also demanded that the commanders get to know their MechWarriors' strengths, weaknesses, and even their personalities.

MechCommander broke new ground as the first game to provide a true tactics simulator that concentrated exclusively on the intelligent and creative use of units rather than the "build and rush" style of gameplay that so many real-time strategy games employ. This is why we have dubbed *MechCommander* a "real-time tactical" game (RTT). *MechCommander* also offered persistence and growth of resources, and characters between missions—both firsts in the real-time genre.

We've received countless requests for additions to *MechCommander,* many of which are reflected in this new version—Waypoints, Ammo Conservation Fire, a Mission Editor, and, of course, more 'Mechs.

Thanks for sticking with us and continuing to enjoy the BattleTech Universe. *MechCommander: Gold* immerses you within this dynamic universe once again. To steal a line from Victor Davion, it is your creativity and ingenuity that will once again determine the fate of Zulu Company, and by extension, the entire Inner Sphere.

Good Luck,
Jordan Weisman
Co-Creator of BattleTech

Introduction

The landscape of war has changed since you last commanded a Force Group. The battle against the Smoke Jaguars has largely been won; the allied Inner Sphere has proven itself to be stronger than the Jaguars expected. But the battle is far from over. A renegade Smoke Jaguar Star Colonel has fled to the planet Cermak, where his forces seem to be bent on unearthing old Star League technologies. Your task in *Desperate Measures*™ is to stop him.

Though the war against the Clans is proceeding smoothly, your operations on Cermak are actually *harder* than your previous operations on Port Arthur. Your foes are more numerous and more determined, not to mention more skilled. They also possess new technologies, both 'Mechs® and weapons, which promise to further complicate your tasks.

Fortunately for you, though, you'll have new technologies of your own. And your command interface has been updated to give you more precise control over the MechWarriors® under your command.

Also in your favor is possession of this strategy guide. It contains all the tips and information from Prima's original *MechCommander*™ strategy guide, plus revised and updated material on the new weapons, 'Mechs, and missions of *Desperate Measures*. You'll find it an invaluable companion as you battle your way across the inhospitable vistas of Cermak.

Read on, then, and prepare yourself for a difficult fight. Even with the help of this book, you'll need skill and resourcefulness to overcome the challenges that await you.

PART 1
THE BASICS

CHAPTER 1
THE BATTLE CONTINUES

The rules of engagement haven't changed, but you'll find that the missions that lie ahead of you on Cermak are substantially harder than many of those on Port Arthur. This high level of difficulty acts as a razor, cutting down the number of viable options until only a few successful decisions remain. Strategies that may have worked in the original *MechCommander* missions may be less effective now. You'll constantly have to strive for efficiency and power in your weapons and 'Mech designs, sound decisions in your grand strategy, and fast, effective movement of your Force Group in unit-level tactics.

This book will show you the path to success. The following pages contain a brief synopsis of what you'll need to learn, why you should learn it, and where to find the relevant information in this book.

WEAPONS & EQUIPMENT

As a MechCommander, you'll have limited control over your 'Mechs. Because you won't have access to complete 'Mech factories, you can't change the degree of armor on your 'Mechs or the location of specific weapons or equipment. You can, however, control what weapons and equipment are loaded onto each 'Mech for each mission—and that's an important decision. Figure 1-1 gives you a sense of just how many choices you have.

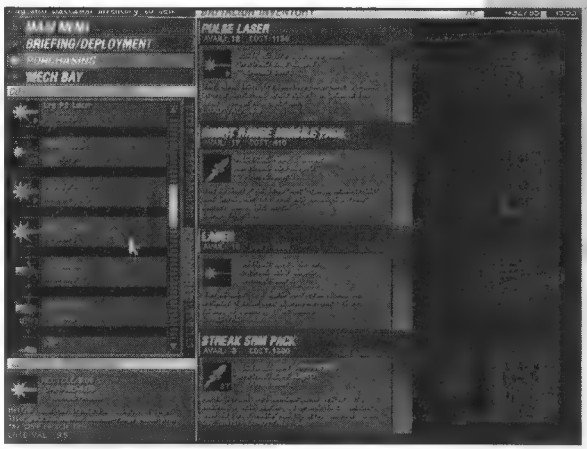


Figure 1-1. You have access to a wide variety of weapons and equipment.

Chapter 2 contains a complete overview of the weapons and equipment you'll use throughout your campaign, including new weapons specific to *Desperate Measures*. Read it thoroughly to learn each weapon's strengths and weaknesses.

'MECHS

The BattleMechs® themselves are at the center of your fight. Both Inner Sphere and Clan designs are at your disposal. Clan designs are technologically superior to those of the Inner Sphere, though Clan 'Mechs are only available through salvage. Instead of neat, regimented rows of identical units, you'll usually find yourself mustering a patchwork Force Group of completely disparate 'Mechs.

Chapter 3 explains the strengths and weaknesses of each 'Mech, and offers suggestions on how to customize each 'Mech to improve its combat readiness.

VEHICLES & EMPLACED DEFENSES

While 'Mechs are the single most fascinating element of Inner Sphere warfare—as well as the deciding factor in most battles—they aren't the only enemies you'll face. Though certainly not as powerful as BattleMechs, assault vehicles and emplaced defenses will conspire to whittle down your Force Groups to nothing. As Figure 1-2 illustrates, vehicles often pose a threat through sheer numbers.

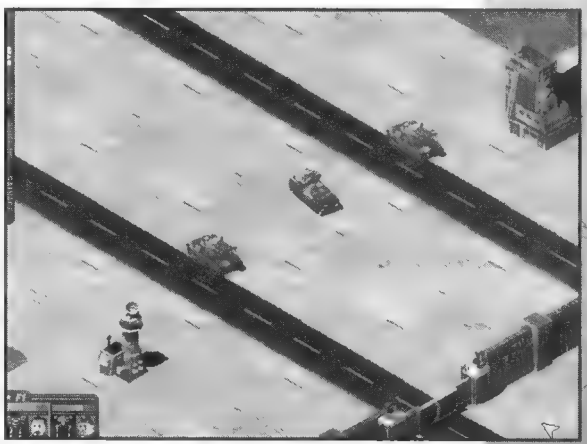


Figure 1-2. Vehicles tend to travel in groups, thus compensating for their limited firepower.

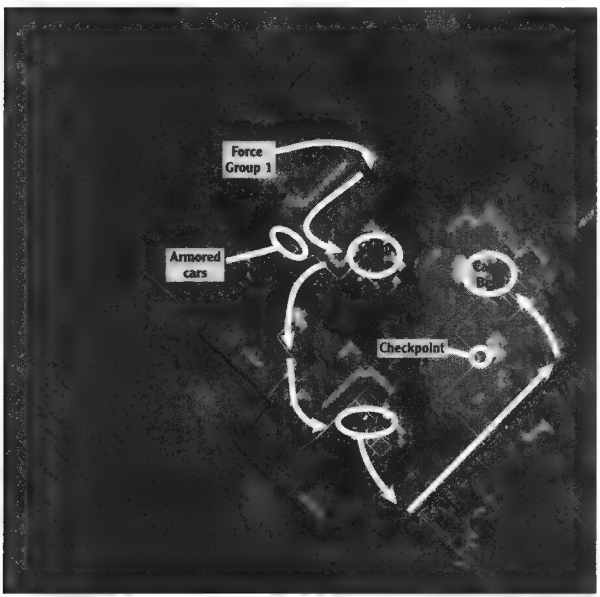
Chapter 4 provides an exhaustive look at the vehicles and emplaced defenses that you'll encounter throughout your campaign, including detailed notes on how to attack them.

Tactics & Techniques

Once you've assembled the right 'Mechs and the right gear, you'll be ready to give the Clan a well-deserved beating—right? Not yet. Before setting foot on the battlefield, you should learn about the strategies and tactics that can spell the difference between success and failure. Should you run close to your enemies or stay back? Should you keep your 'Mechs together or divide them? Questions like these are addressed in Chapter 5.

Also found in Chapter 5 is a complete roster of BattleMech pilots. This roster gives you a sense of which MechWarriors to hire and which ones to leave in the bunker.

Mission Walkthroughs



The heart of MechCommander is its single-player campaign. Chapters 6 through 13 provide detailed walkthroughs of every single-player mission, including Battle Maps like the one in Figure 1-3. These maps show you enemy forces and provide ideal routes for your forces to follow.

Chapters 6 through 10 discuss the missions of the original *MechCommander,* and Chapters 11 through 13 deal with the new *Desperate Measures* campaign.

The walkthroughs in Chapters 6 through 13 supplement the general combat information in Chapters 1 through 5.

Figure 1-3. Detailed maps will help you get through every mission.

Whereas the early chapters give you general pointers, the later ones provide you with specific details to get you through the toughest missions.

You needn't read Chapters 6 through 13 entirely. Rather, we suggest that you use them on an as-needed basis when missions prove too difficult, then read the walk-throughs you skipped after you finish the entire campaign. That way you can find out if you missed anything interesting, and try to catch it on your second time through.

Multiplayer MechCommander Tips

Chapter 14 gives tips on translating your single-player skills into multiplayer *MechCommander* games.

The Mission Editor

We've synthesized some of the essentials of mission editing into Chapter 15. Use it to get a jump-start on mission building.

Cheat Codes

Chapter 16 provides some helpful cheats, as well as some fun ones. Read this chapter in order to learn exactly how to set up the cheats.

CHAPTER 2
WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

After assigning BattleMechs to a given mission, the MechCommander's next vital decision is choosing weapons. A 'Mech's abilities and shortcomings are determined to a surprisingly large degree by the weapons it wields; remove a Laser here, add an Autocannon there, and the 'Mech is suddenly much better suited for some tasks and much worse for others. Indeed, very few MechCommanders use the factory-configured weapon packages of a newly purchased 'Mech, instead choosing to tailor each 'Mech's weapon set to his or her personal weapons theories, the rigors of a specific mission, or—all too often—the limited supply of weapons in the armory.

It's recommended, MechCommander, that you customize your 'Mechs' weapons with the greatest of care. You can't alter the gross tonnage of a 'Mech, nor can you alter its armor rating or jump capabilities. You simply don't have the facilities for these kinds of full-scale customizations in the field. You do, however, have the ability to overhaul each 'Mech's weapons payload. Seize this opportunity!

Every MechCommander has personal opinions about which weapons are most effective. The following pages don't try to prove or disprove any of these personal theories. Instead, they contain hard information on the advantages and liabilities of both Inner Sphere and Clan weapons and equipment, to enable each MechCommander to make informed decisions.

TIP *Some of the weapons discussed in the following pages appear only in the* Desperate Measures *missions; they aren't present in the original* MechCommander *campaign. We make note of these weapons whenever they appear.*

Also, note that in Desperate Measures, *projectile weapons only have one Load Value listed. This value reflects the total weight of the weapon including ammunition. This is different from projectile weapons appearing in the original* MechCommander, *which have listed Load Values for both the weapon alone, and the weapon plus its ammunition (in parentheses after the first value).*

INNER SPHERE WEAPONS

After centuries of internal warfare, the planets of the Inner Sphere drove themselves to technological stagnation followed by a gradual deterioration of knowledge. Science ceased to march forward, and scientists possessing specialized knowledge became rarer and rarer. Soon, crucial technologies were lost. Even the technologies behind the BattleMechs themselves, which were crucial to the ever-present wars of the Inner Sphere, faced extinction. Old factories still churned out BattleMechs, but new designs were rare—and when the factories themselves needed repair, solutions weren't always forthcoming.

In light of these circumstances, we can understand the inferiority of Inner Sphere weapons. Centuries of neglect and entropy have taken their toll, and left the Inner Sphere with a technological disadvantage to the invading Clans. Fortunately for the Inner Sphere, this disadvantage isn't always pronounced. In the case of some weapons, it's incremental. But in general, it's correct to say that the Inner Sphere's weapons are a trifle heavier, slower, and simply less effective than the lean and efficient designs employed in the Clans' formidable OmniMechs.

Energy Weapons

Energy weapons, as their name suggests, fire bursts of raw energy instead of solid projectiles. This class of weapons includes Lasers, Particle Projector Cannons, and Flamers.

Energy weapons typically (but not always) pack less raw punch or feature a slower recycle speed than projectile-firing weapons of roughly similar weights, but they make up for this by never running out of ammunition. MechWarriors piloting 'Mechs with multiple energy weapons might not be the most formidable force on the battlefield, but they tend to have greater staying power than opponents possessing Heavy Autocannons and Gauss Rifles.

Each weapon listed below has several entries followed by a description. The entries are as follows:

- **Damage** is how many "damage points" the weapon causes when it hits the enemy. In the case of missiles, damage is a bit more complicated, because some missiles hit their mark while others don't. The Damage values expressed for missile weapons in this chapter are the average amount of damage done by a typical shot, assuming that 50 percent of the missiles in a given salvo will hit their target.
- **Recycle** is short for Recycle Time, or the number of seconds between shots. Lower numbers indicate a faster rate of fire.
- **Load Value** is the relative size of the weapon. Projectile weapons also have a number in parentheses, which is the combined size of the weapon and its ammunition.
- **Range** is expressed in meters and appears as three values: short, medium, and long. The long-range value is the weapon's absolute maximum range. The short and medium numbers also are significant because a weapon has its best chance of hitting when fired at a target inside its short range, an intermediate chance of hitting a target at medium range, and its worst chance of hitting a target at long range. Some weapons also possess a minimum range inside of which they can't target anything.
- **Cost** is the weapon's full price in Resource Points. Note that you won't get full price when you sell items back to Battalion.
- **Shots** tells you how many times the weapon can fire before running out of ammo. This value doesn't apply to energy weapons, which can fire unlimited times.

- Power is how much damage the weapon deals over a full minute of continuous firing, assuming that all its shots hit the mark. Some weapons deal great damage but fire slowly, while others have low damage but fire quickly. The Power rating is simply a way of combining a weapon's damage and rate of fire into a single rating.
- Power/Size is a measure of a weapon's efficiency. Higher numbers are usually better, because they mean the weapon packs more punch for its size.

TIP *Be very careful when reading the Power and Power/Size values of any weapon. Each weapon has its own distinct advantages and disadvantages, so you can't just discount a weapon with poor Power or Power/Size.*

For example, many weapons with extremely long range have a poor Power/Size value. That's because they've sacrificed efficiency for the ability to shoot at longer range. They're not worse because of that; they've simply made a tradeoff. You have to decide which is more important to you, efficiency or long range.

On the other end of the spectrum, the Clan Heavy Ultra Autocannon has amazing Power and Power/Size values. But before you decide that it's the best weapon in existence, look at the tradeoffs that weapon has made to pack such great Power—most importantly in the area of ammunition.

The bottom line? Consider each weapon carefully, and make your own determinations.

Laser

Damage: 2
Recycle: 5
Load Value: 4
Range: 25/50/75
Cost: 1,060
Power: 24
Power/Size: 6.000

The Laser is an economical weapon. It's small enough that you can fit many of them onto even the smallest 'Mech, cheap enough that cost is never a concern, and highly efficient when you consider the minimal size. Lasers don't deal too much damage in one shot, and their rate of fire isn't impressive—but again, their size is small enough that you can pack them on in bunches.

If you're of the school of thought that likes to pack 'Mechs with heavy weapons that deal concentrated damage, the Laser won't seem too attractive. But if you're looking for efficiency above all else, the Laser is a good candidate. The Laser offers one of the best power-to-size ratios of any Inner Sphere weapon, and it's limited only by its minimal range.

Even if you tend to dislike Lasers, you'll probably find yourself using them occasionally just to round out a 'Mech's payload. They're useful as "filler" because of their small size.

TIP *At the hardest difficulty levels, you'll do better with heavy-hitting weapons (like PPCs) than with small yet efficient designs like the Laser.*

Pulse Laser

Damage: 1
Recycle: 1.75
Load Value: 6
Range: 25/50/75
Cost: 1,130
Power: 34
Power/Size: 5.714

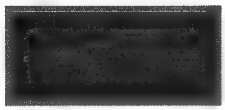
Pulse Lasers beg the question: Do you want a weapon that fires quickly and deals minimal damage, or a weapon that fires slowly but deals heavy damage? The Pulse Laser falls squarely into the former category.

Many MechCommanders rank the Inner Sphere's Pulse Laser low on their list of preferred weapons. It's large and bulky enough that it isn't a great "filler" weapon, and its low damage tends to result in scarred but generally intact enemies instead of enemies with gaping wounds. Furthermore, its Power/Size ratio isn't quite up to the level of the standard Laser.

Small weapons that fire quickly are ideal for chipping away at an enemy BattleMech you want to salvage, as they don't inflict the massive damage that tends to make a 'Mech's engine explode. Furthermore, Pulse Lasers are great protection against small targets that try to swarm your 'Mechs; Elementals come to mind.

Unfortunately, these situations are rare, especially in the *Desperate Measures* campaign at the Normal or Hard difficulty levels. In these missions, at these difficulty levels, standard Pulse Lasers are not a great choice. Your main threats will be massive, heavily armored 'Mechs and vehicles. You'll need weapons that deal massive, concentrated damage to a single part of the enemy 'Mech, rather than small, fast-firing weapons.

Large Laser



Damage: 4
Recycle: 5
Load Value: 9.5
Range: 50/100/150 (Min. 25)
Cost: 4,480
Power: 48
Power/Size: 5.053

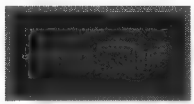
The Large Laser deals exactly twice the damage of a standard Laser, yet consumes more than twice the space. In other words, it's not one of the more efficient weapons you'll encounter. This might initially make the Large Laser seem like a poor choice.

There are, however, definite benefits to the Large Laser. For one thing, the Large Laser deals more concentrated damage than two regular Lasers. Concentrated damage, as you'll learn in Chapter 5, is a true ally in tough fights.

Furthermore, the Large Laser has significantly better range than the standard Laser. This makes it more suited to heavier, slower 'Mechs that can't necessarily get close enough to small targets to employ short-range weapons.

Ultimately, Large Lasers are a decent choice in the early stages of a campaign, especially for 'Mechs that need long-range punch but can't afford to run out of ammunition. Later on, more efficient weapons become available and the Large Laser loses some of its appeal.

Large Pulse Laser



Damage: 2
Recycle: 2
Load Value: 12
Range: 50/100/150 (Min. 25)
Cost: 4,350
Power: 60
Power/Size: 5.000

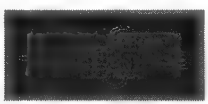
The Large Pulse Laser is essentially what it sounds like: a bigger version of the Pulse Laser, with all the associated benefits and drawbacks. It deals better damage than its smaller cousin and has a better range, but it doesn't deal particularly concentrated damage when compared to the Large Laser.

The Large Pulse Laser's Power rating is significantly better than that of the Large Laser, mainly because of its fast rate of fire. But when you figure in the weapon's additional size, its Power/Size ratio is roughly equivalent to that of the standard Large Laser.

Large Pulse Lasers aren't efficient weapons, but they're decent weapons against lightly armored targets such as Elementals and light vehicles. Their fast rate of fire allows the MechWarrior to dispatch small foes quickly and then rapidly move to the next target.

Again, this is a weapon suitable for the early stages of campaigns, but in later missions you'll find more effective designs.

Large Extended Range Laser



Damage: 4
Recycle: 5
Load Value: 11
Range: 75/150/225 (Min. 50)
Cost: 5,210
Power: 48
Power/Size: 4.364

The Large Extended Range Laser (or Large ER Laser) is in most regards identical to a Large Laser, the primary difference being its extended range. It features the longest possible range of any weapon, but its drawbacks include increased size and a slightly higher cost. These factors conspire to give it one of the worst Power/Size ratios of any weapon.

Before you dismiss the Large ER Laser as an inefficient waste of space, though, bear in mind that most weapons with extremely long ranges make tradeoffs to possess that range. Thus, the Large ER Laser is in good company.

Is the extra range worth the size? That varies with opinion, tactics, and each individual mission. If you like to fight at extremely long ranges and plan to utilize the Large Extended Range Laser's range to the fullest, then it's a very capable weapon. If you tend to fight close up, then it's a very bad choice, indeed.

Fight at long range as much as possible, especially in the *Desperate Measures* missions, so use this weapon for the early stages of the campaign. Later on, you should be able to replace this weapon with the Clan variant, which is significantly more efficient and effective.

Large X-Pulse Laser (Desperate Measures Only)

Damage: 1.5
Recycle: 0.75
Load Value: 13
Range: 75/150/225 (Min. 50)
Cost: 19,570
Power: 120
Power/Size: 9.231

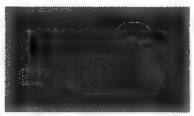
Normally we discourage the use of Pulse Lasers, because we prefer weapons that deal massive, concentrated damage rather than fast-firing weapons that deal only minor damage with each shot. However, we make an exception in the case of the Large X-Pulse Laser. This weapon is, quite simply, a must have. We think it's the single best weapon that you can buy from Battalion, and arguably the best all-around weapon, period. Buy Large X-Pulse Lasers whenever they become available, and use them as much as possible. They're truly superior weapons.

The key to the Large X-Pulse Laser's potency is its hyper-fast fire rate. It only deals 1.5 points of damage per shot, but it shoots so quickly that its damage output over a short period of time is matched only by certain massive Autocannons—and those Autocannons weigh much more than the Large X-Pulse Laser, have extremely limited range, and carry a limited supply of ammo.

The Large X-Pulse Laser's fast fire rate is also extremely helpful under certain circumstances. When you're facing swarms of small vehicles or Elementals at long range, for example, the Large X-Pulse Laser is highly effective. Also, mixing Large X-Pulse Lasers with heavy-hitting weapons like ER-PPCs is a nice combination. The heavy hitters open gaping holes in enemy armor, and the Large X-Pulse Lasers (ideally) deal enough extra damage to finish off the enemy without rendering it unsalvageable.

Again, we stress that X-Pulse Lasers are excellent weapons. Obtain them whenever you can, either through salvage or outright purchase, and use as many as possible.

Heavy Flamer



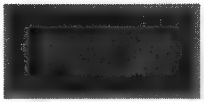
Damage: 5
Recycle: 7.5
Load Value: 8
Range: 25/50/75
Cost: 2,030
Power: 40
Power/Size: 5.000

The Heavy Flamer is a heavy-duty, short-range weapon suitable for 'Mechs that wish to carry a big punch. The Heavy Flamer isn't the most efficient short-range weapon; you can equip a 'Mech with two Lasers for the same eight-ton Load Value as a Flamer, and the Lasers deal more damage than the Flamer because of their faster rate of fire.

So why choose the Flamer? It has the distinct advantage of lumping all its damage into one damaging, concentrated burst instead of spreading it out into several smaller shots like the Lasers. This concentrated damage is a very powerful tool, as explained further in Chapter 5.

The Flamer is a good choice for the MechCommander looking to fit his or her 'Mechs with potent short-range punch. The weapon's reasonably light weight makes it a heavy hitter that even the lightest BattleMechs can easily wield, and that's truly unique.

Particle Projector Cannon (PPC)

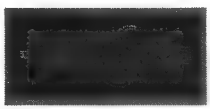


Damage: 7.5
Recycle: 7.5
Load Value: 12
Range: 50/100/150 (Min. 25)
Cost: 6,900
Power: 60
Power/Size: 5.000

Particle Projector Cannons are among the most sought-after weapons of the Inner Sphere, and for good reason. Their tonnage requirements are fairly steep and they have a long down time between shots—but when they do manage to squeeze off a shot, they're guaranteed to deal serious damage. Single PPC shots can blow up vehicles and bring 'Mechs to their knees.

MechCommanders seeking to outfit their 'Mechs with a potent long-range weapon often agonize over whether to select a PPC or an Autocannon. The two weapons are fairly close in terms of abilities; they feature similar range, and although the PPC weighs less and deals more damage per shot, the Autocannon has a higher rate of fire. The bottom line is that both weapons are potent. The PPC is a better choice on extended missions where ammunition shortages are a concern, while the Autocannon is perhaps a better choice for all-out slugging because of its better rate of fire.

Extended Range Particle Projector Cannon (ER-PPC)



Damage: 7.5
Recycle: 7.5
Load Value: 14.5
Range: 75/150/225 (Min. 50)
Cost: 7,210
Power: 60
Power/Size: 4.138

The ER-PPC features better range than the standard PPC, at the cost of 2.5 tons. As with the Extended Range Lasers, personal preference and fighting style must be your guides in determining whether the multi-ton sacrifice is worth the extra range.

We recommend long-range fighting whenever possible, especially in the difficult *Desperate Measures* campaign, so we heartily recommend ER-PPCs despite their relative inefficiency. They're hard to beat for sheer, concentrated punch at long range, and that's exactly what you want.

Note, however, that the Clan version of the ER-PPC is *vastly* better than this Inner Sphere version. Whenever possible, replace Inner Sphere ER-PPCs with the Clan version, which deals quite a bit more damage.

Projectile Weapons

Whereas energy weapons have an unlimited supply of energy, projectile weapons possess a limited supply of ammunition. The exact type of ammunition varies from weapon to weapon, but the one constant is the danger of running out.

Projectile weapons compensate for their limited ammunition with a somewhat faster rate of fire (and often, better power) than energy weapons. This makes them tempting, but be careful not to load your 'Mechs with too many projectile weapons—or they'll be helpless when the ammo runs out.

Light Autocannon

Damage: 1
Recycle: 2
Load Value: 8.5 (9.5)
Range: 75/150/225 (Min. 50)
Cost: 1,410
Ammo: 100
Power: 30
Power/Size: 3.158

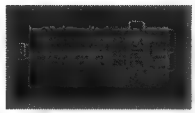
The Light Autocannon has excellent range and seldom runs out of ammunition. It also fires very quickly. However, the large tonnage of the weapon coupled with its extremely low damage-dealing ability makes it unpopular with many MechCommanders. It holds the dubious distinction of being the least efficient weapon in the Inner Sphere in terms of Power/Size, save for the Long Tom, which compensates somewhat by dealing splash damage.

It's recommended that you steer clear of the Light Autocannon unless you truly intend to make use of its range and rate of fire—for example, against emplaced

defenses or multiple small vehicles. This weapon is perhaps best suited to medium-sized, fast 'Mechs that will spend most of any given combat fighting at extreme range.

Even if you decide that you want a weapon of this general description, a Light Ultra Autocannon or Light LB-X Autocannon is a much better choice.

Light Ultra Autocannon

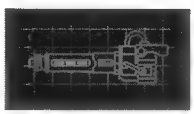


Damage: 1
Recycle: 1.33
Load Value: 9.5 (11)
Range: 75/150/225 (Min. 50)
Cost: 2,740
Ammo: 112
Power: 45
Power/Size: 4.091

The Light Ultra Autocannon features an even faster rate of fire than the Light Autocannon, but at the cost of extra tonnage. This weapon is well suited to dispatching multiple small targets from afar.

The Light Ultra Autocannon deals substantially more damage per second and is more efficient than a standard Light Autocannon. If you can afford the extra space and cost, the Light Ultra Autocannon is preferred over the Light Autocannon. However, the Light LB-X Autocannon is better still.

Light LB-X Autocannon (Desperate Measures Only)

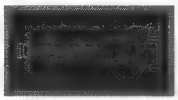


Damage: 1.5
Recycle: 1.75
Load Value: 9.5
Range: 75/150/225 (Min. 50)
Cost: 3,270
Ammo: 260
Power: 51
Power/Size: 5.368

The Light LB-X Autocannon brings a measure of respectability to the typically inefficient Light Autocannon family. It features better efficiency than the other two Inner Sphere-made Light Autocannons and carries significantly more ammunition. It works like a shotgun and is capable of hitting multiple armor locations simultaneously. It is, therefore, better at shredding armor off of 'Mechs, possibly making them more salvageable. If you use an Inner Sphere-made Light Autocannon, this is the model to choose.

Despite these positives, however, we still recommend using heavier-hitting weapons in most cases. This is especially the case in the *Desperate Measures* missions, which feature uniformly tough opposition.

Autocannon

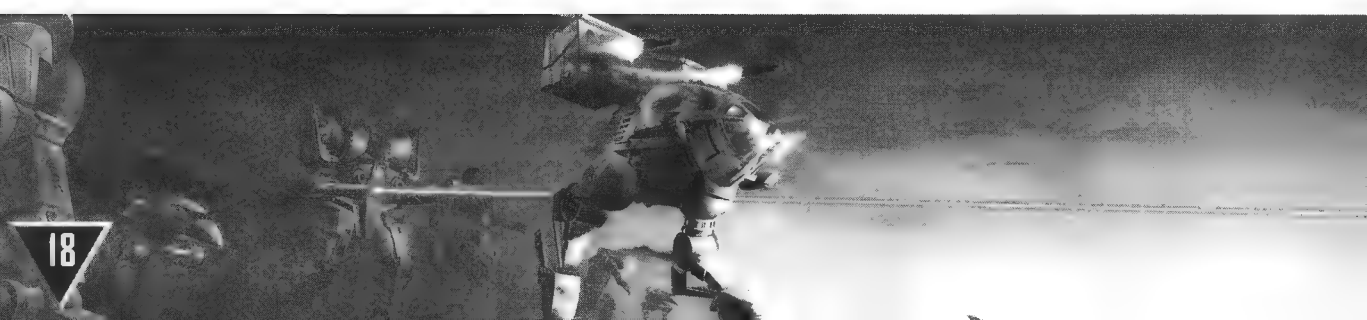


Damage: 6
Recycle: 5
Load Value: 13.5 (15.5)
Range: 50/100/150 (Min. 25)
Cost: 7,000
Ammo: 40
Power: 72
Power/Size: 4.645

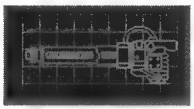
A good all-around weapon, the Autocannon is a favorite among MechCommanders. It has good range and a moderate ammunition supply, and it pumps out concentrated damage at a considerably faster rate than the somewhat comparable PPC. Thus, a BattleMech equipped with an Autocannon is ready for almost any fight.

One of the few real downsides to the Autocannon is its limited ammo. Forty shots may sound like a lot, but on extended missions it's not uncommon for Autocannons to run dry. This limitation prevents MechCommanders from making Autocannons the true staple weapon of prolonged missions.

Use Autocannons in moderation, and you'll find them to be one of the better weapons available in the early stages of a campaign.



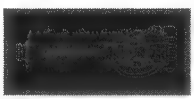
LB-X Autocannon (Desperate Measures Only)



Damage: 6
Recycle: 4
Load Value: 14.5
Range: 50/100/150 (Min. 25)
Cost: 7,890
Ammo: 90
Power: 90
Power/Size: 6.207

The LB-X Autocannon is superior to the standard Autocannon, and should be used instead whenever possible. It works like a shotgun and is capable of hitting multiple armor locations simultaneously. It is, therefore, better at shredding armor off of 'Mechs, possibly making them more salvageable. It features better power and efficiency than the standard Autocannon, plus it carries over twice as much ammo. This makes the LB-X Autocannon one of the best weapons that you can purchase from Battalion. Use it in the early stages of the *Desperate Measures* campaign, replacing it later on with the Clan version.

Heavy Autocannon



Damage: 15
Recycle: 7.5
Load Value: 17.5 (19.5)
Range: 25/50/75
Cost: 10,890
Ammo: 13
Power: 120
Power/Size: 6.154

A true monster of the battlefield, the Heavy Autocannon dishes out more raw damage per minute than most other Inner Sphere weapons. It's also highly efficient for an Inner Sphere weapon. But to balance this power the Heavy Autocannon has downsides that are both numerous and severe: it's very expensive, it has short range, its recycle speed is slow, and it weighs more than any other weapon mounted on a BattleMech, period. As if that isn't enough, the unkindest cut of all is its severely limited ammunition supply—a meager 13 shots.

Why suffer all these inconveniences? The answer lies in the weapon's unprecedented power. Few weapons can approach the sheer power unleashed by a single shot of this weapon. Its concentrated fury is capable of killing a perfectly intact 'Mech with a single shot, given a lucky hit. Even a less-than-optimal hit causes a massive loss of armor and internal structure.

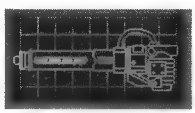
The Heavy Autocannon is a great temptation to many MechCommanders, but it can't be used indiscriminately. It must be conserved for worthy targets and, in many cases, must be left behind altogether in favor of smaller weapons. The ammunition restrictions are just too severe for you to take it on every mission.

Heavy Autocannons are best used in missions when:

- You want close-range punch
- You don't have access to more efficient Heavy Autocannons, like the Heavy LB-X Autocannon
- It's either a short mission, or you have access to Repair Bays, a Refit Truck, or an Ammo Truck
- You have the discipline to use Ammo Conservation fire mode whenever the Autocannon isn't needed

Even then, you may want to hold off until you find more practical, efficient Autocannons, like the Heavy LB-X Autocannon, discussed below.

Heavy LB-X Autocannon (Desperate Measures Only)



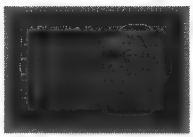
Damage: 15
Recycle: 6
Load Value: 19.5
Range: 25/50/75
Cost: 11,530
Ammo: 35
Power: 150
Power/Size: 7.692

The Heavy LB-X Autocannon is an excellent design, and ranks as one of the very best weapons you can purchase from Battalion. It works like a shotgun and is capable of hitting multiple armor locations simultaneously. It is, therefore, better at shredding armor off of 'Mechs, possibly making them more salvageable. It's superior to the standard Heavy Autocannon in almost every way, especially in the all-important field of ammunition. Its plentiful supply of ammo greatly relaxes the strict circumstances under which you should take a large Autocannon, as you won't need to stop for ammo

every moment or two with this weapon. Still, the ammo isn't unlimited, so you should use this weapon with care in long missions lacking Repair Bays or Refit Trucks. Use the Ammo Conservation command to save precious shots.

If you want to provide your 'Mech with close-range firepower, this is one of the best weapons available. We strongly recommend it for 'Mechs specializing in close-range combat.

Gauss Rifle



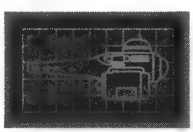
Damage: 7.5
Recycle: 5
Load Value: 15.5 (16.5)
Range: 75/150/225 (Min. 50)
Cost: 15,150
Ammo: 16
Power: 90
Power/Size: 5.455

The Gauss Rifle is often compared to an ER-PPC. The weapons feature identical damage and range, and similar weight. The Gauss Rifle is heavier than the ER-PPC but fires faster, and thus it's one of the most powerful long-range weapons available.

This distinction comes at the price, however, of limited ammunition. MechCommanders must choose between the staying power and endless shot supply of the PPC (or ER-PPC) and the rapid-fire fury of the Gauss Rifle. The Gauss is clearly the more potent weapon over the short term, but it's also heavier and more susceptible to ammo shortages.

In many respects the Gauss Rifle is like a long-range Heavy Autocannon. It's one of the heaviest hitters at its range, but its limited ammo prevents you from taking it along on every mission. We usually pick the ER-PPC instead.

Light Gauss Rifle (Desperate Measures Only)



Damage: 5
Recycle: 5
Load Value: 13.5
Range: 75/150/225
Cost: 7,110
Ammo: 50
Power: 60
Power/Size: 4.444

The Light Gauss Rifle deals less damage than a standard Gauss Rifle, but it compensates somewhat by weighing less and having a much more plentiful ammo supply.

The Light Gauss Rifle is actually quite comparable to an ER-PPC. Its weight is in the same range, and it deals similar damage over a short period of time. However, the ER-PPC deals its damage in bigger chunks, plus it can fire an unlimited number of times. Thus, while the Light Gauss Rifle is very comparable, we usually lean toward the ER-PPC.

Short-Range Missile (SRM) Pack

Damage: 1
Recycle: 4
Load Value: 2.5 (3)
Range: 25/50/75
Cost: 410
Ammo: 62
Power: 15
Power/Size: 5.000

Short-Range Missiles are extremely light, and they fire at a moderate pace. They carry lots of ammunition and possess limited range. They're comparable to a Laser in efficiency.

All things considered, SRM Packs are the consummate "filler" weapon, offering a little extra punch at a minimal tonnage cost. Use them to round out 'Mechs with an almost full payload, or just to add a little short-range power. But don't use them as a mainstay of your 'Mechs, because they usually aren't capable of dealing a knockout punch.

TIP *Missiles of both short-range and long-range varieties deal one point of damage per missile that connects with the target. However,* MechCommander *always assumes that the average number of missiles hit the target—and the average is half the total number of missiles, rounded up. Thus, an SRM Pack, which fires two missiles, will always connect with one of the two. The result is one point of damage with every shot.*

An LRM Rack, which fires five missiles, will always connect with three.

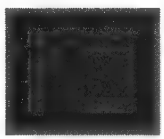
Streak Short-Range Missile (SRM) Pack

Damage: 2
Recycle: 4
Load Value: 4.5 (5)
Range: 50/100/150 (Min. 25)
Cost: 1,300
Ammo: 62
Power: 30
Power/Size: 6.000

Streak Short-Range Missiles deal twice as much damage as regular Short-Range Missiles. That's because both Streak SRMs always hit their target, as opposed to regular SRMs, which tend to hit with only one of their two missiles.

This extra accuracy and damage comes at the cost of extra tonnage, so the Streak SRM isn't as perfect as a "filler" weapon as the standard SRM. But on larger 'Mechs with bigger weapon payloads, the Streak SRM is usually the better choice.

Long-Range Missile (LRM) Rack



Damage: 3
Recycle: 10
Load Value: 3 (4)
Range: 75/150/225 (Min. 50)
Cost: 1,760
Ammo: 24
Power: 18
Power/Size: 4.500

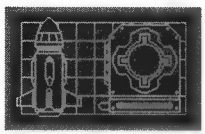
Long-Range Missiles deal good damage for their light weight, though their sluggish Recycle rate means that they're not fired too often during combat. A 'Mech loaded with multiple LRMs has a devastating first punch to open any combat, but tends to be vulnerable as the enemy charges in and attacks with faster-firing weapons. It's usually a bad idea to have LRMs constitute more than 25 percent of a 'Mech's total payload—though there are significant exceptions.

Despite their slow Recycle speed, LRMs are still effective weapons, and their extreme range makes them a great choice for destroying stationary defenses (such as Turrets) from afar.

A 'Mech loaded almost exclusively with LRMs is vulnerable by itself, but can be an excellent "fire support" 'Mech that hangs back while the rest of the Force Group fights at close range. In this role, it can dish out missiles from afar and take little damage in return.

TIP *LRMs can be fired over heavy walls that would block the fire of other weapons. Take advantage of this fact by hiding your LRM-equipped 'Mechs behind walls, then letting the enemy have it.*

Heavy Thunderbolt (Desperate Measures Only)



Damage: 12
Recycle: 6
Load Value: 21
Range: 50/100/150 (Min. 50)
Cost: 9,115 (Salvage Only)
Ammo: 32
Power: 120
Power/Size: 5.712

The Heavy Thunderbolt, which can only be salvaged (it's not available from Battalion), is attractive because it deals massive, concentrated damage and can be fired over walls and obstacles. It's also extremely heavy, and it has an unusually long arming distance for a medium-range weapon, so it's unwieldy against enemies that get too close.

The Heavy Thunderbolt has a reasonable supply of ammo, and its efficiency is quite good for a weapon that deals such heavy damage. This makes it a very good weapon overall, though not as desirable as a Large X-Pulse Laser or a Clan ER-PPC.

Use the Heavy Thunderbolt on large 'Mechs that can handle its significant tonnage and that need mid-range power.

TIP *Because the most effective 'Mechs are often geared toward either long-range or short-range fighting, the mid-ranged Heavy Thunderbolt is sometimes hard to use effectively. But, it has a place in Force Groups equipped with primarily long-range weapons, as long-range battles often close to mid range whether you want them to or not.*

Rail Gun (Desperate Measures Only)

Damage: 20
Recycle: 7.5
Load Value: 30
Range: 75/150/225 (Min. 50)
Cost: 16,215 (Salvage Only)
Ammo: 15
Power: 160
Power/Size: 5.333

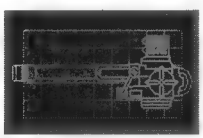
This relic of the Star League era is not available from Battalion; it must be salvaged.

The Rail Gun fires shots that deal more damage than those of any other weapon. However, thanks to its massive Load Value (an unprecedented 30) it's not the most efficient weapon available.

The Rail Gun is a potent weapon, but it must be used in the right situations. It requires a heavy yet fast 'Mech—heavy enough to carry the Rail Gun, yet fast enough to maintain separation from the target and thus take advantage of the weapon's long range. You'll also either need a short mission or some method of replenishing your ammo, because if the Rail Gun runs out of ammo, it effectively becomes dead weight. And with a Load Value of 30, that's more dead weight than you can afford to carry. And finally, you should be sure to have your most accurate MechWarrior piloting the 'Mech with the Rail Gun because each shot is precious; you really don't want to miss.

To summarize, use the Rail Gun only on missions where you have a 'Mech suited to carrying it, where long-range power is needed, and where reloads are likely to be frequent, either because the battlefield has Repair Bays or you've decided to bring along a Refit/Ammo Truck. Under these circumstances, the Rail Gun can live up to its massive promise. Otherwise, you'll think you're doing the right thing by bringing along a massive weapon, but you'll suffer when the ammo runs dry.

Long Tom Cannon (Desperate Measures Only)



Damage: 8 (Splash Damage)
Recycle: 7.5
Load Value: 34
Range: 75/150/225 (Min. 50)
Cost: 33,840
Ammo: 25
Power: 64 (More if multiple targets are hit)
Power/Size: 1.882 (More if multiple targets are hit)

When we said that the Rail Gun's Load Value of 30 was unprecedented, we lied. The Long Tom tips the scales at a whopping 34, making it *the* heaviest weapon you can load onto a 'Mech.

The Long Tom looks pathetic on paper. Its Power is pitiful, and its Power/Size is ridiculous. However, what these statistics don't account for is that the Long Tom's ammo has a blast radius, and anything within that radius takes damage. Thus, the Long Tom's effectiveness increases greatly if you target enemies that are clustered close together.

The Long Tom holds the promise of great results if you can use it against clustered targets. Unfortunately, enemy 'Mechs seldom oblige you by walking side by side. Indeed, they often end up running amongst your own 'Mechs, in which case the Long Tom is capable of dealing friendly fire. Stationary targets are vulnerable to the Long Tom, but quite frankly, you shouldn't waste valuable ammo on Turrets and enemy structures.

The bottom line is that the Long Tom is tough to use effectively. We recommend avoiding it on the harder difficulty levels, though it's fun to play with at Easy difficulty.

Clan Weapons

Clan weapons typically improve on Inner Sphere designs in one or more ways. Some models are identical to their Inner Sphere counterparts save for their lesser weight, while others feature a heavier punch, faster Recycle speeds, better range, or some combination of these benefits.

The superiority of Clan weapons over Inner Sphere weapons varies greatly from system to system. The Clan Short-Range Missile Pack, for example, fires a bit faster than the Inner Sphere variant but isn't vastly superior. The Clan ER-PPC, on the other hand, is truly a technological marvel that eclipses its Inner Sphere cousin in terms of both weight and power.

Generally speaking, Inner Sphere MechCommanders should integrate salvaged Clan technology into their Force Groups as much as possible. This technology is simply too powerful and efficient to ignore.

Energy Weapons

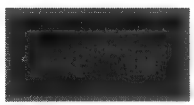
Clan energy weapons tend to fire faster and weigh less than those of the Inner Sphere, but otherwise are similar to the Inner Sphere weapons that share the same name. Thus, instead of reiterating each weapon's strengths and weaknesses (which we already covered in the Inner Sphere section), here we'll concentrate on how these weapons are different from their Inner Sphere variants.

Clan ER Laser

Damage: 2
Recycle: 5
Load Value: 3.5
Range: 50/100/150 (Min. 25)
Cost: 2,380
Power: 24
Power/Size: 6.857

The Clan ER Laser fires farther (yet weighs less) than a standard Inner Sphere Laser. The difference between this weapon and the Inner Sphere Laser is most pronounced in 'Mechs that spend most of the battle fighting at medium to long range.

Clan Pulse Laser



Damage: 1
Recycle: 1.75
Load Value: 4
Range: 25/50/75
Cost: 1,700
Power: 34.3
Power/Size: 8.571

The Clan Pulse Laser is identical to its Inner Sphere counterpart save for its drastically lower weight. The weight makes a huge difference; a 'Mech loaded with several Clan Pulse Lasers is a veritable speed demon, firing Laser bursts at an amazing rate.

The Clan Pulse Laser is hard to beat for raw efficiency.

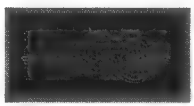
Clan Large ER Laser

Damage: 5
Recycle: 5
Load Value: 10
Range: 75/150/225 (Min. 50)
Cost: 9,690
Power: 60
Power/Size: 6.000

The Clan's Large ER Laser is an excellent weapon that weighs less and deals more damage than its Inner Sphere counterpart. This makes it a very attractive item for MechCommanders seeking a heavy-hitting, long-range weapon with relatively minimal tonnage requirements.

Because we recommend long-range weapons for most *Desperate Measures* missions, we recommend the Clan Large ER Laser—especially for times when you can't get your hands on Clan ER-PPCs or Large X-Pulse Lasers.

Clan Large Pulse Laser



Damage: 2.5
Recycle: 2
Load Value: 11
Range: 50/100/150 (Min. 25)
Cost: 8,010
Power: 75
Power/Size: 6.818

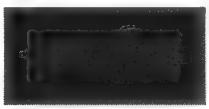
The Clan Large Pulse Laser weighs less and deals fractionally more damage than the Inner Sphere Large Pulse Laser. Because the Inner Sphere model is already a very damaging weapon, these modest improvements make the Clan Large Pulse Laser an often-overlooked powerhouse.

Clan Flamer

Damage: 5
Recycle: 6
Load Value: 7
Range: 25/50/75
Cost: 3,620
Power: 50
Power/Size: 7.143

Typical of the efficiency built into most Clan weapons, the Clan Flamer fires at a faster rate than its Inner Sphere counterpart yet weighs less, resulting in a highly efficient, highly effective close-range weapon that can add offensive punch to even the lightest of 'Mechs. It's recommended for light 'Mechs that need to fight at close range.

Clan ER-PPC



Damage: 11.25
Recycle: 7.5
Load Value: 13.5
Range: 75/150/225 (Min. 50)
Cost: 21,450
Power: 90
Power/Size: 6.667

The Clan ER-PPC is almost too good to be true. It weighs less than the Inner Sphere's ER-PPC and deals excellent damage at extreme range. Thanks to its lethal combination of power and range, it's a great all-around weapon that you should use whenever possible.

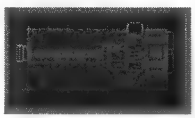
The Clan ER-PPC isn't technically the most efficient weapon in existence, but few other weapons can match its blend of excellent power, excellent range, and unlimited shots. When you consider the sacrifices that most weapons make to achieve long range and high power, either in terms of efficiency or ammunition, you'll understand the value of this weapon.

Although it's true that all weapons have their uses, some are indeed better than others. This is one of the best; use it as much as you can.

Projectile Weapons

The Clan's projectile weapons carry on the proud tradition of technological superiority manifested in their energy weapons. Interestingly, though, the Clan weapons don't tend to improve on the one area where Inner Sphere projectile weapons are weakest—ammunition. The heaviest-hitting Clan projectile weapons possess equal or (in some cases) less ammunition than their Inner Sphere variants. Thus, the truism that projectile weapons trade extra short-term power for long-term ammo shortages is especially true when applied to Clan weapons.

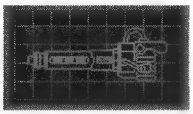
Clan Light Ultra Autocannon



Damage: 1
Recycle: 1.33
Load Value: 7 (8.5)
Range: 75/150/225 (Min. 50)
Cost: 3,550
Ammo: 112
Power: 45
Power/Size: 5.294

The Clan Light Ultra Autocannon weighs significantly less than the Inner Sphere variant. This transforms it from a weapon of dubious efficiency to one of highly respectable efficiency. It's still not a heavy hitter by any means, but it's hard to find a weapon that deals more damage at extended range for similar tonnage.

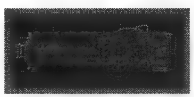
Clan Light LB-X Autocannon (Desperate Measures Only)



Damage: 1.5
Recycle: 1.75
Load Value: 8.5
Range: 75/150/225 (Min. 50)
Cost: 3,560
Ammo: 260
Power: 51
Power/Size: 6.050

The Clan Light LB-X Autocannon is another solid weapon. It's generally preferable to the Clan Light Ultra Autocannon, thanks to its slightly better damage and greatly enhanced ammunition supply. If you're going to pick a Light Autocannon, we'd recommend this one over all others.

Clan Ultra Autocannon

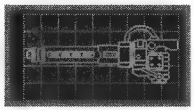


Damage: 6
Recycle: 4
Load Value: 11.5 (13.5)
Range: 50/100/150 (Min. 25)
Cost: 12,590
Ammo: 30
Power: 90
Power/Size: 6.667

The Clan Ultra Autocannon fires at a considerably faster rate than an Inner Sphere Autocannon, yet weighs less. Over an extended time, it deals damage equal to a Gauss Rifle, putting it in the same ballpark as the heaviest-hitting 'Mech-mounted weapons.

This weapon's only deficiency is its curiously low ammunition supply—lower, in fact, than the Inner Sphere model. Thus, although the Clan Ultra Autocannon is far superior to the standard Autocannon over the short term, the Inner Sphere model is in some ways better suited to long missions with multiple targets.

Clan LB-X Autocannon (Desperate Measures Only)

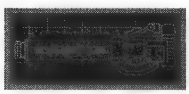


Damage: 6
Recycle: 4
Load Value: 13.5
Range: 50/100/150 (Min. 25)
Cost: 8,480
Ammo: 80
Power: 90
Power/Size: 6.667

If you're looking for a medium-sized Autocannon, use the Clan LB-X Autocannon. Its power and efficiency are on par with that of the potent Clan Ultra Autocannon, but its greatly superior ammo supply ensures that you won't run dry at inopportune times.

Bear in mind before you take a regular Autocannon that a Clan ER-PPC offers nearly identical power and efficiency, deals more concentrated damage, and has better range. Unless you're dead set on medium-range combat, therefore, look to the Clan ER-PPC or Large X-Pulse Laser before turning to medium-sized Autocannons.

Clan Heavy Ultra Autocannon



Damage: 15
Recycle: 5
Load Value: 16 (17.5)
Range: 25/50/75
Cost: 27,400
Ammo: 10
Power: 180
Power/Size: 10.286

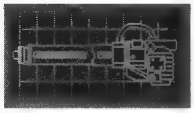
The Clan Heavy Ultra Autocannon weighs less than an Inner Sphere Heavy Autocannon and fires at a faster rate. No weapon in existence can equal the damage this weapon ladles out over a short time. However, the chronic ammunition shortages that plague its Inner Sphere cousin are augmented in this weapon because of its higher rate of fire and its fractionally lower ammo capacity (only 10 shots).

Think of this weapon as a chainsaw with only a few drops of gasoline left to fuel it. While the fuel lasts it can rip through anything in mere seconds—but unfortunately the fuel won't last much longer.

If you're gearing a 'Mech toward short-range combat, seriously consider using this weapon—and if you do, seriously consider using an Ammo Truck or Refit Truck. Without the portable ammo source, you'll have an extremely hard time keeping the weapon filled. Even Repair Bays won't completely alleviate the problem; you almost have to commit to using a Truck, which can tag along and continually re-supply the Autocannon.

Even *with* an Ammo Truck or Refit Truck, you must conserve this weapon and use it only on worthwhile enemies. Learn to use the Ammo Conservation fire mode.

Clan Heavy LB-X Autocannon (Desperate Measures Only)



Damage: 15
Recycle: 6
Load Value: 17.5
Range: 25/50/75
Cost: 12,850
Ammo: 35
Power: 150
Power/Size: 8.571

The Clan Heavy LB-X Autocannon doesn't fire as quickly as a Clan Heavy Ultra Autocannon, but in typical LB-X Autocannon style, it makes up for this by carrying a lot more ammunition. We generally recommend this weapon above all other Heavy Autocannon designs, save for missions where you're absolutely sure to have a constant source of ammo.

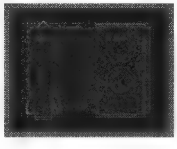
Clan Gauss Rifle

Damage: 7.5
Recycle: 5
Load Value: 12.5 (13.5)
Range: 75/150/225 (Min. 50)
Cost: 18,520
Ammo: 16
Power: 90
Power/Size: 6.667

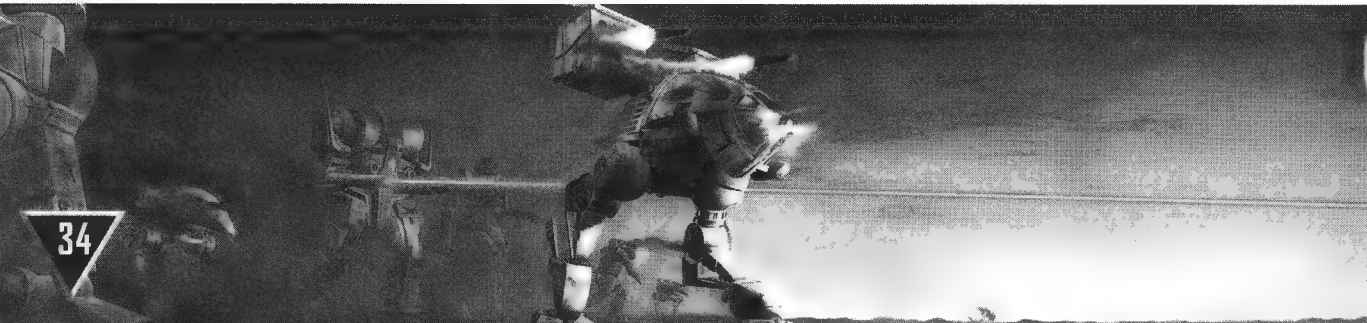
The Clan's Gauss Rifle is another weapon that improves on the Inner Sphere model in terms of tonnage. As with the IS Gauss Rifle, the Clan variant does great damage at long range but suffers from limited ammunition.

If you want more ammunition and don't need the Clan Gauss Rifle's excellent range, the Clan's Ultra Autocannon does comparable damage over a short period of time. But if it's potent extended-range marksmanship you're after, you want either an ER-PPC or a Gauss Rifle.

Clan Short-Range Missiles



Damage: 1
Recycle: 3
Load Value: 2.5 (3)
Range: 25/50/75
Cost: 740
Ammo: 83
Power: 20
Power/Size: 6.667



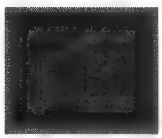
The Clan's Short-Range Missiles fire at a slightly faster rate than Inner Sphere Short-Range Missiles, and they also carry more ammunition. These features make them extremely efficient and a good addition to any BattleMech requiring light, short-range punch.

Clan Streak Short-Range Missiles

Damage: 2
Recycle: 3
Load Value: 4.25 (4.75)
Range: 25/50/75
Cost: 1,450
Ammo: 83
Power: 40
Power/Size: 8.421

Clan Streak Short-Range Missiles weigh fractionally less, and fire a bit faster, than their Inner Sphere counterparts. These improvements transform an already efficient design into one of the most efficient weapons you can possess. As with all SRMs, this version lacks massive punch, but this is hardly an issue when the weapon is so effective. Use one or two of these weapons to add short-range punch to an otherwise long-range 'Mech, or use multiples to create a short-range powerhouse.

Clan Long-Range Missiles



Damage: 3
Recycle: 10
Load Value: 2 (3)
Range: 75/150/225 (Min. 50)
Cost: 2,340
Ammo: 24
Power: 18
Power/Size: 6.000

The Clan Long-Range Missile Rack weighs substantially less than Inner Sphere Long-Range Missiles. The weapon itself doesn't do more damage, but the reduced weight allows you to pack on more weapons—a substantial asset. Use these instead of the Inner Sphere version whenever possible.

Miscellaneous Equipment

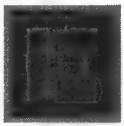
The list of miscellaneous equipment available on your campaign is short and sweet. Not every item in this list is a sensor, but all of them are sensor related.

Sensors

Sensors come in several varieties. Functionally, the main difference between these sensors is their range. Note that the effective range of a 'Mech's sensors decreases the faster the 'Mech is moving. The pilot's Sensor skill counteracts this effect, so the better the Sensor skill the closer to maximum the 'Mech's sensors operate while moving.

There's not much strategy involved in loading sensors on your 'Mechs. Just bear in mind that you shouldn't spend inordinate sums on Advanced Sensors, because your enemies seldom have such powerful sensors themselves. Also, remember that only one 'Mech in your Force Group needs to possess great sensors for all group members to enjoy the benefits.

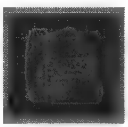
Sensor—Basic



Load Value: —
Cost: 1,000
Range: 350 meters

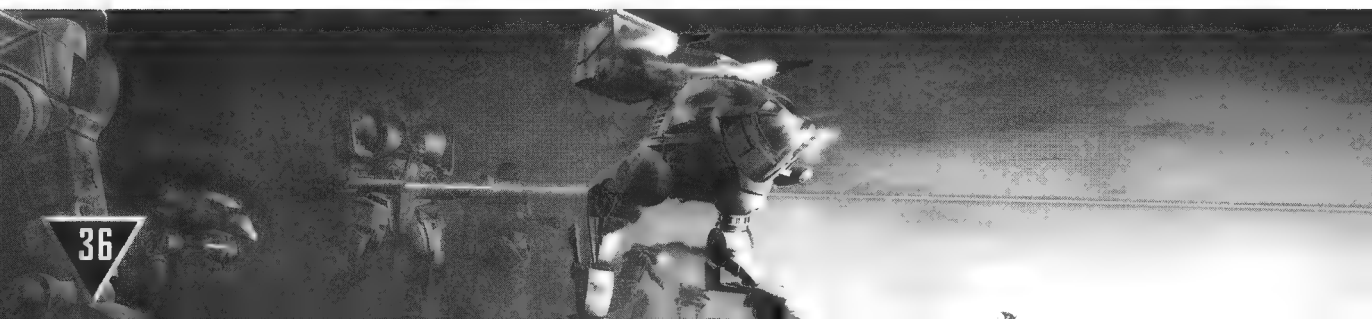
The Inner Sphere Basic Sensor is standard on most Inner Sphere 'Mechs. It has a range of 350 meters and, like all sensors, it can't detect Elementals or powered-down 'Mechs.

Sensor—Intermediate

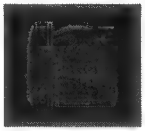


Load Value: 0.5
Cost: 2,000
Range: 470 meters

The Inner Sphere Intermediate Sensor weighs a half-ton but possesses significantly more range than the Basic Sensor.



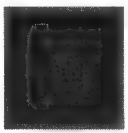
Sensor—Advanced



Load Value: 1
Cost: 6,000
Range: 525 meters

The Inner Sphere Advanced Sensor possesses unparalleled range. However, it can only be mounted in the *Raven* or in light Clan 'Mechs.

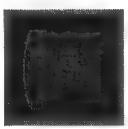
Clan Sensor—Standard



Load Value: —
Cost: 1,500
Range: 385 meters

The Clan's Standard Sensor is marginally better than the Inner Sphere's Basic Sensor, and like the Basic Sensor it doesn't weigh anything.

Clan Sensor—Extended



Load Value: 0.5
Cost: 3,500
Range: 490 meters

Although it doesn't possess quite the range of the Inner Sphere Advanced Sensor, the Clan Extended Sensor weighs half a ton less.

Other Equipment

The following pieces of equipment aren't sensors, but they all either work like sensors or have some effect on sensors.

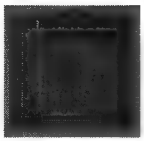
Beagle Probe

Load Value: 1.5
Cost: 1,000
Range: Special

The Beagle Probe detects powered-down units at half the normal sensor range. This is occasionally useful, as campaign missions frequently take you into Clan territory where powered-down BattleMechs are on guard.

The Beagle Probe can't detect Elementals.

Guardian ECM Suite



Load Value: 1.5
Cost: 3,000
Range: 525 meters

The Inner Sphere's Guardian ECM (Electronic Countermeasures) Suite halves the range of any enemy sensors it contacts. Load this item onto a 'Mech that also possesses good sensors, and your Force Group is practically guaranteed to spot enemy forces long before they can see you.

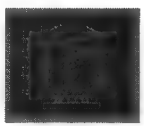
Unfortunately, this system can only be loaded onto *Raven* 'Mechs or light Clan 'Mechs.

Clan Active Probe

Load Value: 1
Cost: 1,200
Range: Special

The Clan Active Probe is almost identical to the Inner Sphere's Beagle Probe, save that it weighs half a ton less.

Clan ECM Suite



Load Value: 1
Cost: 3,400
Range: 525 meters

The Clan ECM Suite is identical to the Inner Sphere model, save that it weighs half a ton less.

Weapon Choices

Ultimately, it's up to you to decide which weapons to load onto your BattleMechs. Some weapons, such as Lasers, are general-purpose staples that you can't go wrong with. Others, like Heavy Autocannons, can be a great asset or a tremendous liability depending on which missions you use them in and how well you conserve your ammunition.

Generally speaking, the game difficulty you play at will make a difference in which weapons are effective. At lower difficulty levels, most weapons can be employed to good effect. But when you're playing *Desperate Measures* at Hard difficulty, you'll want the heaviest-hitting weapons available. Experiment with weapon choices, and pay attention to the differences they make as you proceed through a mission. With the right weapons, a seemingly difficult mission can be rendered manageable. With the wrong ones, an easy task can be made formidable.

CHAPTER 3
BATTLEMECHS

BattleMechs are the foundation of Inner Sphere warfare. Vehicles, emplaced defenses, and Elementals play significant roles in many battles, but it's undeniably the BattleMech that reigns supreme. BattleMechs are the final arbitrator of conflict, both throughout the Inner Sphere and beyond.

As such, it's vital for every MechCommander to recognize the various designs employed by the Clan and Inner Sphere, and understand their strengths and weaknesses. Carefully examine each 'Mech in the chapter because the default configurations are what the player is confronted with most often.

Each BattleMech is rated in several different areas. First you'll find these attributes:

- *Weight* is the 'Mech's raw tonnage.
- *Speed* is the 'Mech's top speed, provided in meters per second (m/sec).
- *Jump* is the distance a Jump-equipped 'Mech of that type can leap. Obviously, this value doesn't apply to the Armor and Weapon variants.

Other attributes change depending on which 'Mech variant (Weapon, Armor, or Jump) you're dealing with. These are presented in the form of a small table.

- *Armor Points* tells you how much total overall armor protects a particular variant. Different body locations will have differing amounts of armor protection.
- *Payload* is how much Load Value of weapons and components the variant can carry.
- *Alpha Strike* is how much damage the variant would deal if it unloaded all its weapons onto a single target simultaneously. (Note that this value changes if you modify the 'Mech's weapon payload.)
- *10-Second* is shorthand for 10-Second Damage, and it's another way of measuring the 'Mech's punch. It's the amount of damage the 'Mech would deal to a target if it fired continuously with all weapons for 10 seconds. (Again, this value changes if you modify the 'Mech's weapon payload.)
- *Cost* is the 'Mech's cost in Resource Points.

TIP *The new BattleMechs included in* Desperate Measures *also appear in this chapter. There is, however, a difference in these 'Mechs' data tables. They're so new to Battalion that the exact numbers for their Armor Points and jumping distances aren't yet known. (Note that in your* Desperate Measures *manual, most of the new 'Mechs' Armor Sources are listed as "Unknown"—even for Inner Sphere 'Mechs!) Thus, instead of numerical values representing these 'Mechs' jump capabilities and Armor Points, you'll find general descriptive adjectives such as "Long," "Light," or "Moderate."*

INNER SPHERE BATTLEMECHS

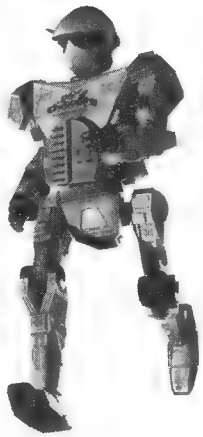
Inner Sphere 'Mechs are a diverse lot, ranging from small, speedy recon 'Mechs like the *Commando* to the lumbering hulk known as the *Atlas*. Although not as efficient as Clan 'Mechs, Inner Sphere designs aren't so inferior that they can't hold their own when piloted by skilled individuals.

Learn these designs well, as they'll constitute the bulk of your forces throughout the greater part of the campaign.

TIP *Unless otherwise noted, all Inner Sphere 'Mechs come with a Basic Sensor.*

Commando

Weight: 25 tons
Speed: 27 m/sec
Jump: 83 meters



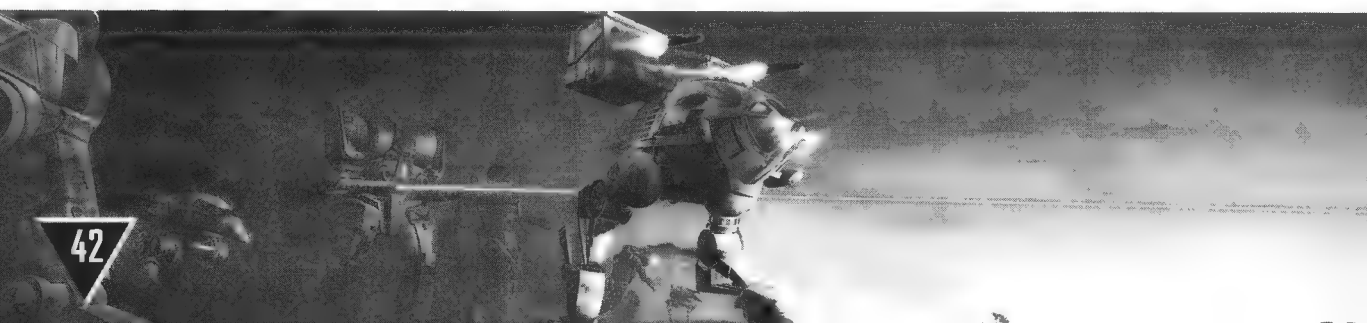
Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	96	16	6	14	14,150
Jump	48	16	6	14	16,250
Weapons	48	19	8	18	13,290

Armor, Jump Payloads: Laser, 4 SRM Packs
Weapon Payload: 2 Lasers, 2 SRM Packs, 1 Streak SRM Pack

The *Commando* is a cheap, fast scouting 'Mech. Because its speed is similar to that of the 35-ton *Raven,* however, its diminutive tonnage is no real advantage. Make no mistake: This is a small, lightly armored 'Mech suitable for reconnaissance or skirmishing, not heavy combat. It is, however, very inexpensive—a quality endearing to a MechCommander on a tight budget.

Commandos are good for filling out a drop payload. They can be used to scout ahead of your main force or as support 'Mechs that lend a hand in firefights. It's crucial that they don't attack first and bear the brunt of enemy attacks, as they wither quickly under heavy weapon fire. Let your other 'Mechs charge in and distract the enemy while *Commandos* lend fire support.

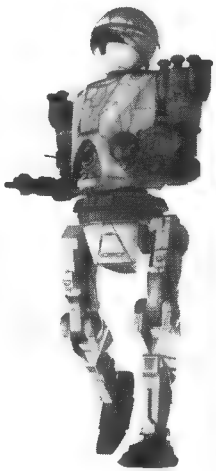
Commandos also are ideal for missions requiring your forces to be in two places at once. For example, let's say you need to destroy a bridge and guard a pass. You can leave the majority of your forces at the pass to provide a stalwart defense, and meanwhile have the *Commando* sprint deep into enemy territory and attack the bridge (or spot it so that artillery strikes can destroy it).



The *Commando's* weapon payload is adequate but not overwhelming. SRM Packs normally aren't weapons of choice, but the minimal weapons capacity of the *Commando* makes them a good selection. Those preferring a heavier-hitting 'Mech could replace SRMs with another Laser or two.

TIP *In* Desperate Measures, *the ultimate scout 'Mech is the* Stiletto. *The presence of the* Stiletto *reduces the relative value of the* Commando, *as the* Stiletto *is so much faster and more capable.*

Firestarter



Weight: 30 tons
Speed: 27 m/sec
Jump: 100 meters

Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	112	19	11	15.83	17,620
Jump	64	19	11	15.83	19,720
Weapons	64	22	11.5	19	19,530

Armor, Jump Payloads: 2 Heavy Flamers, SRM Pack
Weapon Payload: Laser, PPC, 2 SRM Packs

The Armor and Jump variants of the *Firestarter* are true to the 'Mech's name, sporting a pair of Heavy Flamers that deal good damage at close range. The Weapon variant has standard-issue SRM Packs and a Laser, plus a real surprise: a PPC.

The *Firestarter* generally outperforms the *Commando* at both reconnaissance and fire support. Its extra tonnage allows it to carry surprisingly effective firepower, especially in its Weapon configuration, and its extra armor lets it run through combat zones without being felled by passing shots.

The default weapon configurations for *Firestarters* are fairly good. The Armor and Jump variants are capable of dealing surprisingly severe short-range damage with their Heavy Flamers, while the Weapon variant's PPC makes it an instant contributor to battles that develop at long range.

TIP *Because small 'Mechs tend to fare poorly in close-range combat, you might want to remove the Heavy Flamers and replace them with long-range weapons, turning the* Firestarter *into a fire-support 'Mech.*

Stiletto (Desperate Measures Only)

Weight: 35 tons
Speed: 36 m/sec
Jump: Long

Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	Light	17.5	11	14	22,420
Jump	Light	17.5	11	14	26,780
Weapons	Light	20.5	8	16	22,070

Armor, Jump Payloads: Streak SRM Pack, 3 LRM Racks, 1 Sensor-Intermediate
Weapon Payload: 1 Large Pulse Laser, 2 LRM Racks, 1 Sensor-Intermediate

The *Stiletto* is an extraordinary new BattleMech that you should make extensive use of. The *Desperate Measures* campaign features several missions where it's of great importance to scout the terrain, lure enemy 'Mechs out of their starting areas, and/or jump over obstacles. If you purchase a *Stiletto* for this task, you certainly won't be disappointed.

Inner Sphere 'Mechs are normally slower than Clan 'Mechs of comparable size, but the *Stiletto* is geared for speed, and it's by far the fastest 'Mech available to you. It can outrun any enemy it encounters, making it invaluable for scouting the battlefield and jumping quickly in and out of enemy bases. It can't handle much punishment, though, and it can't dish out much damage—so don't expect to use it in a combat role.

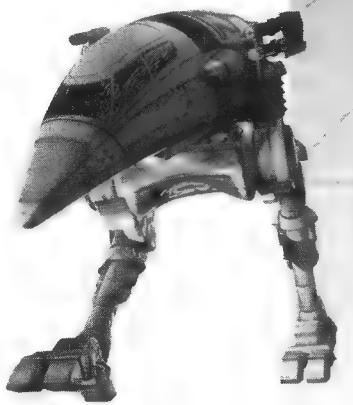
If you buy a *Stiletto,* we strongly suggest the Jump variant. Because the whole point of the *Stiletto* is mobility, why not maximize that quality? Also, the Weapon and Armor variants don't add enough extra payload or armor, respectively, to make the *Stiletto* into a great fighter. Don't try to make it something it's not; go with the Jump variant.

Equip your *Stiletto* with long-range weapons almost exclusively; the LRM Racks on the Armor and Jump variants are ideal. These allow the *Stiletto* to sit well back from a battle and lend fire support, and to take out Turrets hidden behind heavy walls.

TIP *You only need one scout unit per mission (if that), so you should only need one* Stiletto. *More would be overkill—plus, because the* Stiletto *isn't a great fighter, you'd be hampering your Force Group's combat ability by taking multiples.*

Raven

Weight: 35 tons
Speed: 27 m/sec
Jump: 100 meters



Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	120	19	8	18	27,640
Jump	72	19	8	18	29,740
Weapons	72	22	10	21	28,900

Armor, Jump Payloads: 2 Lasers, 2 SRM Packs, Streak SRM Pack, Guardian ECM Suite, Beagle Probe, Sensor-Advanced

Weapon Payload: Large Laser, 2 Lasers, Streak SRM Pack, Guardian ECM Suite, Beagle Active Probe, Sensor-Advanced

The *Raven* represents a cutoff point in terms of Inner Sphere 'Mechs' speed. The next heaviest Inner Sphere design, the *Hollander II,* is slower than the *Raven* and also isn't capable of jumping as far. Thus, the *Raven* can be considered the biggest of the Inner Sphere's scout or reconnaissance 'Mechs.

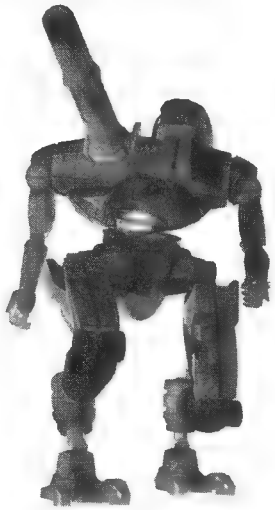
The *Raven* can hold a number of weapons similar to its lighter cousin, the *Firestarter,* but its armor is somewhat tougher. Also, the *Raven* is a high-tech design capable of carrying the sophisticated Inner Sphere Advanced Sensor or Clan Active Probe. It's the only Inner Sphere 'Mech capable of holding these two items.

The default weapons loaded onto *Ravens* are adequate but lacking in punch, and should probably be retooled by the MechCommander; SRMs are good filler weapons, but they lack the power demanded by tough battles. Another Laser in place of SRMs is usually a good tradeoff; LRMs are another option.

TIP *If you're playing the* Desperate Measures *missions, you're better off using a* Stiletto *than a* Raven. *If you're playing the original* MechCommander *missions, on the other hand, the* Stiletto *is unavailable, making the* Raven *the best Inner Sphere-made scout 'Mech.*

Hollander II

Weight: 45 tons
Speed: 24 m/sec
Jump: 83 meters



Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	128	25.5	11.5	24	34,240
Jump	88	25.5	11.5	24	35,950
Weapons	88	30	13.5	27	35,380

Armor, Jump Payloads: Gauss Rifle, Laser, Streak SRM Pack
Weapon Payload: Gauss Rifle, Large Laser, Laser

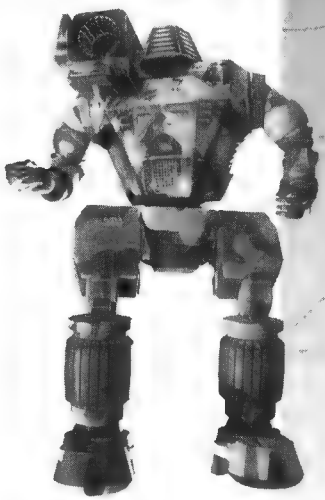
The *Hollander II* is a curious-looking beast, mainly because of its trademark Gauss Rifle. Like the *Hunchback,* the *Hollander II* belongs to a class of 'Mechs that try to pack the biggest, deadliest weapons onto the smallest possible frame. The result is formidable, but not without its drawbacks.

The *Hollander II* is somewhat slower than the *Commando, Firestarter,* and *Raven,* so it's less suitable than those designs for quick strikes and scouting.

Although most MechCommanders agree that there's a certain beauty to packing a massive Gauss Rifle onto an economical 45-ton frame, the drawbacks are significant. If the Gauss Rifle is destroyed in combat or (more likely) runs out of ammunition, the *Hollander II* loses the majority of its firepower and becomes little more than a spectator. The Weapon variant at least has its Large Laser to fall back on, but the *Hollander II* is still a mere shadow of its former self when the Gauss Rifle is inoperative.

A conservative MechCommander could achieve good effects by ripping out the Gauss Rifle and replacing it with a PPC or ER-PPC, which don't rely on ammunition and would leave room for another small weapon.

Hunchback



Weight: 50 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Jump: 67 meters

Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	176	28.5	19	28	33,160
Jump	128	28.5	19	28	33,680
Weapons	128	33	21	32	34,100

Armor, Jump Payloads: Heavy Autocannon, 2 Lasers
Weapon Payload: Heavy Autocannon, Large Laser, Laser

The *Hunchback* is little more than a platform for the massive Heavy Autocannon. Because of this weapon, the *Hunchback* is deadly at close range, capable of defeating 'Mechs twice its size in a matter of moments. It's also a surprisingly limited 'Mech, incapable of fighting at long range or participating in sustained firefights because of the Heavy Autocannon's limited range and ammunition.

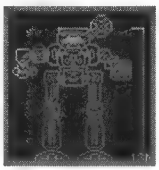
Heavy Autocannon aside, the *Hunchback* is similar to a tank—tough but slow. It features substantially better armor than the *Hollander II* and can carry several tons more weapons, but its speed is a large step down from the *Hollander II*. The result is an extremely durable mid-sized 'Mech that's adequate for missions that don't require speed.

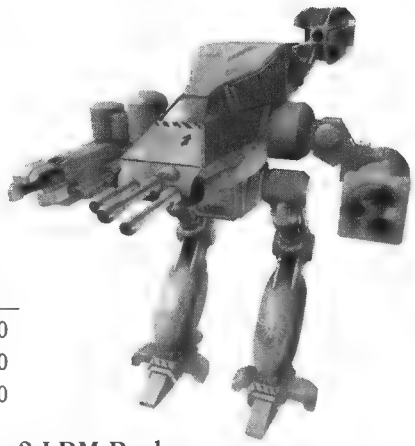
You'll have to make some tough decisions when you purchase a *Hunchback*. The Heavy Autocannon is formidable and oh-so-tempting, but its limited ammo begs the question: Can you afford to spend over 17 tons on a weapon that'll only fire 13 times in a mission? Sometimes, when the mission calls for heavy hitters and you have access to frequent refits, the answer is yes. But other times, when drop weight is limited and endurance is key, the answer is no.

TIP *The* Hunchback *is a poor choice for* Desperate Measures *missions because of its poor speed.*

Bushwhacker (Desperate Measures Only)

Weight: 55 tons
Speed: 24 m/sec
Jump: Short





Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	Moderate	29.5	15	24	34,680
Jump	Moderate	29.5	15	24	35,950
Weapons	Moderate	33.5	17	28	33,260

Armor, Jump Payloads: Laser, SRM Pack, LB-X Autocannon, 2 LRM Racks
Weapon Payload: 2 Lasers, SRM Pack, LB-X Autocannon, 2 LRM Racks

The *Bushwhacker,* along with the super-fast *Stiletto,* is the only 'Mech that's strongly recommended for purchase in the *Desperate Measures* campaign. This is because speed is extremely useful in most *Desperate Measures* missions, and the *Bushwhacker* is faster than any other Inner Sphere 'Mech of its size. If you want to build a team of fast, capable 'Mechs, your first and best option is to use salvaged Clan designs—but if you aren't lucky enough to salvage many of those, a *Bushwhacker* or two will help round out a Force Group.

Use the Armor or Weapon variant of the *Bushwhacker,* as the Jump variant can't jump particularly far.

Heavy-hitting, long-range weapons like Large X-Pulse Lasers are a great addition to the *Bushwhacker,* because its speed allows it to maintain long range with most enemies, thereby maximizing the value of such weapons.

Centurion

Weight: 55 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Jump: 67 meters

Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	184	31.5	16	26	34,090
Jump	136	31.5	16	26	34,610
Weapons	136	36	19.5	28	36,390

Armor, Jump Payloads: Autocannon, 2 LRM Racks, 2 Lasers
Weapon Payload: Autocannon, 2 LRM Racks, PPC

The *Centurion* is a relatively nondescript 'Mech with few visible strengths or weaknesses. It's particularly useful in early *MechCommander* campaign missions, where it tends to outweigh enemy 'Mechs by a sizable factor.

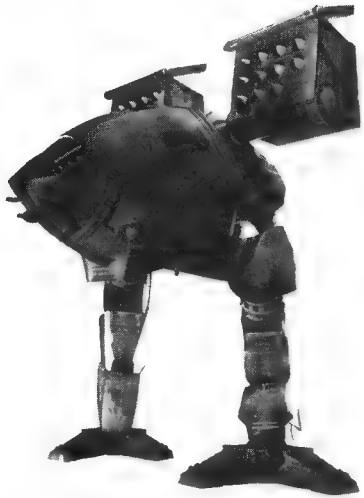
At 55 tons, the *Centurion* can support a few limited-ammunition weapons (such as the Autocannon that it comes with in default configurations). However, you might want to rearrange the weapon payload to make the *Centurion* less dependent on ammo, removing the Autocannon and a few small weapons and replacing them with a PPC or numerous Lasers.

TIP *As with many Inner Sphere designs, the Centurion is good for the early stages of the* MechCommander *campaign but its low speed makes it unsuitable for the tougher missions of* Desperate Measures.

If you're forced to use slow 'Mechs in a Desperate Measures *mission, you might as well use heavier 'Mechs that travel just as quickly as the Centurion, such as the* Awesome.

Catapult

Weight: 65 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Jump: 67 meters



Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	208	36	20	29.43	37,200
Jump	144	36	20	29.43	39,920
Weapons	144	40	22	32	37,070

Armor, Jump Payloads: 6 LRM Racks, 2 Pulse Lasers
Weapon Payload: 6 LRM Racks, Large Pulse Laser, Laser

The *Catapult* in its default configuration is a particularly well-armored 'Mech. It's also something of a paradox, because its tough armor makes it suitable for front-line slugging, but its weapon payload (consisting largely of LRMs) is better suited for a long-range fire-support 'Mech.

If you leave the *Catapult* in its default configuration you'd be well advised to use it in the fire-support role suggested by its weapons. It's almost helpless at short range, though its Pulse Lasers come in handy when the *Catapult* is swarmed by smaller, faster enemies such as Elementals. Allow the *Catapult* to rain missiles on the enemy while other 'Mechs serve to distract, and you'll find the *Catapult* a valuable asset indeed.

If you adjust the weapon configuration, you can use the *Catapult* in almost any role, including front-line slugger. Its armor is tough enough that it won't suffer from the change of pace.

Jagermech

Weight: 70 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Jump: 67 meters

Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	192	41	10	31.38	37,080
Jump	128	41	10	31.38	39,800
Weapons	128	45	8	33.38	36,030

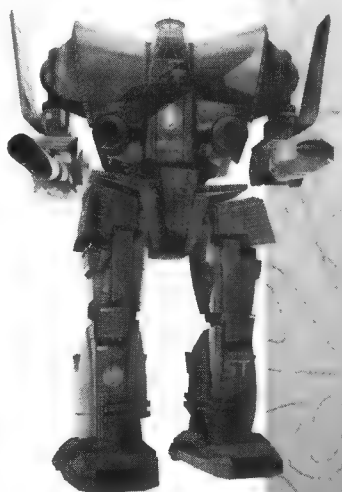
Armor, Jump Payloads: Large ER Laser, 2 Lasers, 2 Light Ultra Autocannons
Weapon Payload: Large ER Laser, Large Pulse Laser, 2 Light Ultra Autocannons

The *Jagermech* is five tons heavier than the *Catapult* but actually carries marginally less armor than its lighter cousin; all that extra tonnage has been devoted to increased weapon payload. Thus, the *Jagermech* represents the philosophy that the best defense is a good offense.

A quintessential heavy 'Mech, the *Jagermech* boasts slow to moderate speed and armor while bristling with weapons. Some might quibble with the default configurations, however, which contain long-range weapons with good fire rates but very little in the way of true heavy hitters. A PPC in place of one of the Light Ultra Autocannons and Lasers might provide just that.

Awesome

Weight: 80 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Jump: 67 meters



Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	224	54.5	26.5	38	51,490
Jump	160	54.5	26.5	38	54,170
Weapons	160	59	24.5	41	48,310

Armor, Jump Payloads: 3 ER-PPCs, 2 Lasers
Weapon Payload: 3 ER-PPCs, 2 Pulse Lasers

The *Awesome* is an 80-ton monster that moves just as quickly as a 50-ton *Hunchback*. It's better armored than the *Jagermech* and *Catapult,* though not so much that the difference is overwhelming.

The true difference between the *Awesome* and those lesser 'Mechs lies in raw weapon tonnage. With over 54 tons to spend on firepower, the *Awesome* is a walking weapon platform capable of reducing smaller 'Mechs to piles of charred rubble in seconds flat.

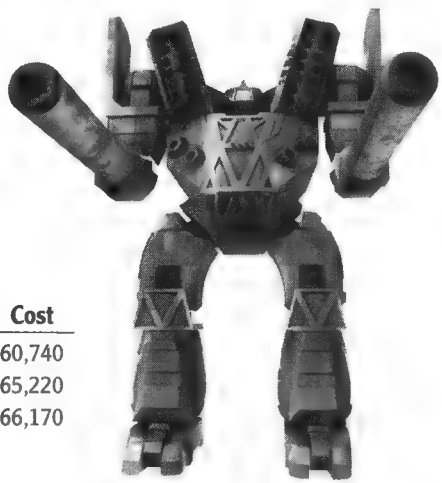
MechCommanders who belong to the school of thought that endorses multiple small weapons instead of a few big ones will retrofit the *Awesome*'s payload immediately on purchase, but those in favor of big guns will love it.

The sheer power of the *Awesome*'s triple PPCs, not to mention their devastating range, make an *Awesome* in its default configuration a true force to be reckoned with. This sort of power almost guarantees a devastating shot in the first few volleys.

All 'Mechs are useful, but the *Awesome* tends to be more useful than most large Inner Sphere designs. It features great weapons, and it lies right at the speed cutoff point; heavier 'Mechs made by the Inner Sphere all travel more slowly. Thus, if you want a heavy Inner Sphere 'Mech, this is the one we recommend.

Mauler (Desperate Measures Only)

Weight: 90 tons
Speed: 15 m/sec
Jump: Short



Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	Heavy	63.5	23	46	60,740
Jump	Moderate	63.5	23	46	65,220
Weapons	Moderate	76.5	34.5	64	66,170

Armor, Jump Payloads: Large Laser, 2 LRM Racks, 2 Light LB-X Autocannons, 2 Light Gauss Rifles

Weapon Payload: 2 Heavy LB-X Autocannons, 1 Large Laser, 1 Large ER Laser, 1 Light LB-X Autocannon, 2 Light Gauss Rifles

The *Mauler,* a new design, lives up to its name. It relies heavily on ammo-dependent projectile weapons, but thanks to its use of the relatively high-ammo Light Gauss Rifles and LB-X Autocannons, this limitation isn't nearly as detrimental as it could be.

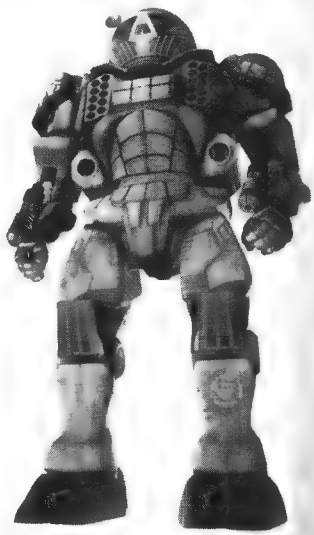
Despite the *Mauler*'s power, we don't recommend it too highly for most *Desperate Measures* campaign missions—at least, not those that require speed. The *Mauler* is powerful, to be sure, but its sluggish speed can be limiting in the speed-intensive missions you'll encounter frequently in the expansion campaign.

If you select the Weapon model, bear in mind that Heavy LB-X Autocannons can be tough to use when your 'Mech is this sluggish—so you might want to use longer-range weapons. Some foes undoubtedly will be foolish enough to approach the *Mauler,* but those that hang back will be able to easily weave out of the Heavy LB-X Autocannons' limited range.

Atlas

Weight: 100 tons
Speed: 15 m/sec
Jump: 50 meters

Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	288	66.5	29.5	54.43	69,510
Jump	192	66.5	29.5	54.43	73,550
Weapons	192	77.3	37.5	56.71	68,480



Armor, Jump Payloads: Gauss Rifle, 2 Large ER Laser, 4 LRM Racks, 2 Pulse Lasers
Weapon Payload: Gauss Rifle, 2 ER-PPCs, 4 LRM Racks, Laser, Pulse Laser

The *Atlas* is the heaviest 'Mech on the battlefield, boasting superior armor and unrivaled weapon tonnage. If there's any downside to this monster, it's certainly the lack of speed, which—like the 'Mech's formidable tonnage—is practically unmatched.

An *Atlas* occupies a huge amount of DropShip space, so you'll need to think twice before taking it on missions featuring limited tonnage. Furthermore, if you know you'll need a modicum of speed, you might want to reconsider bringing the *Atlas.* You can only afford this beast on missions with heavy tonnage limits and no speed considerations whatsoever.

If there was ever a 'Mech suited to carrying massive weapons such as the Gauss Rifle and Heavy Autocannon, this is it. Still, you need to exercise restraint. Loading up

the *Atlas* with such weapons gives it incredible short-term power, but leaves the 'Mech a well-armored husk when the ammunition runs dry. Ultimately, the need to balance short-term punch with ammunition considerations might be the toughest decision the *Atlas* inspires.

Shortcomings aside, the *Atlas* has a place on the battlefield, especially in the original *MechCommander* missions. In *Desperate Measures,* however, the enemy will be able to run circles around it.

Clan 'Mechs

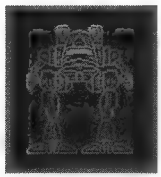
Clan 'Mechs are superior to Inner Sphere designs in several ways. The most significant areas of superiority are as follows:

- They carry Clan weapons, which are superior to Inner Sphere designs. See Chapter 2 for details.
- Less room is taken up by engines and internal components, leaving significantly more room for weapons and armor than in Inner Sphere 'Mechs of comparable tonnage.
- Mid-sized to heavy Clan 'Mechs are considerably faster and more mobile than Inner Sphere 'Mechs of comparable tonnage.

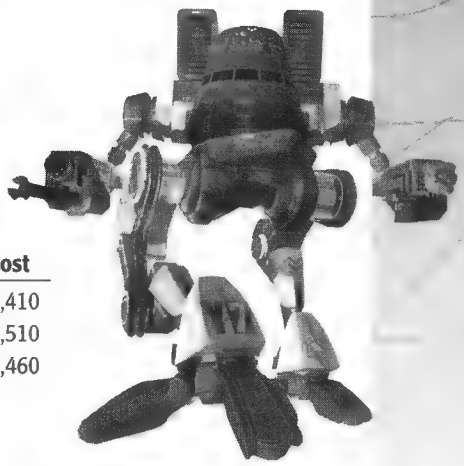
Whenever possible, you should integrate salvaged Clan 'Mechs into your battle plans.

TIP *Unless otherwise noted, all Clan 'Mechs come with a Standard Clan Sensor.*

Uller



Weight: 30 tons
Speed: 27 m/sec
Jump: 100 meters



Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	112	21	7	22	23,410
Jump	64	21	7	22	25,510
Weapons	64	25	9	29	22,460

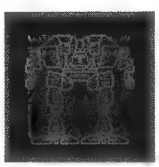
Armor, Jump Payloads: 2 Clan ER Lasers, Clan Streak SRM Pack, Clan Light Ultra Autocannon
Weapon Payload: 2 Clan ER Lasers, 2 Clan Streak SRMs, Clan Light Ultra Autocannon

Though not light years beyond its nearest Inner Sphere equivalents, the *Uller* shows its dominance by holding significantly more weapons than the Inner Sphere's 35-ton *Raven.*

The *Uller* is a fast 'Mech suitable for both scouting and light combat duties. In its base configuration, it's most suitable for mid-range combat, but we recommend that you retool it for long-range combat, which tends to be easier on a light 'Mech's armor.

Ullers are among the most common Clan 'Mechs, and you'll eventually collect several. As your campaign progresses, you'll want to gradually phase out your supply of *Commandos* and *Firestarters* and replace them with *Ullers,* which make excellent scouts.

Cougar



Weight: 35 tons
Speed: 27 m/sec
Jump: 100 meters

Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	128	28	11.5	21.5	33,870
Jump	80	28	11.5	21.5	36,050
Weapons	80	34	17	37	38,280

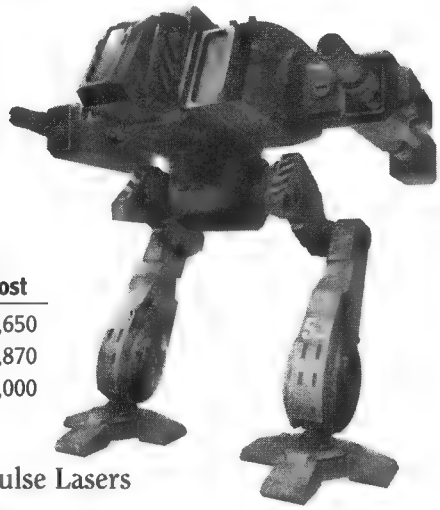
Armor, Jump Payloads: Clan Heavy Flamer, Clan Large Pulse Laser, 3 Clan LRM Racks
Weapon Payload: 2 Clan Large Pulse Lasers, 4 Clan LRM Racks

The *Cougar* exhibits even more superiority than the *Uller* in terms of armor and weapon-carrying capacity. Its armor is similar to that of the *Hollander II,* while its weapon capacity is roughly equal to that of a *Hunchback*—a 'Mech outweighing it by

15 tons! So, when you obtain a *Cougar* as salvage you shouldn't consider it a light 'Mech in the same category as *Firestarters* and *Ravens,* but rather, the equal of a medium-tonnage Inner Sphere design.

In their base configurations, the Armor and Jump variants of the *Cougar* possess an interesting mix of weapons. The Heavy Flamer deals good damage at close range, while the Large Pulse Laser and LRM Racks constitute its long-range threat. The Weapon variant is more focused in its ambitions, pairing Large Pulse Lasers and LRM Racks for a 'Mech that's at its best when fighting at medium to long range.

Shadow Cat (Desperate Measures Only)



Weight: 45 tons
Speed: 27 m/sec
Jump: Medium

Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	Moderate	29	9	33	39,650
Jump	Light	29	9	33	40,870
Weapons	Light	36.5	9.5	41.5	42,000

Armor, Jump Payloads: 2 Clan ER Lasers, 2 Clan Large Pulse Lasers
Weapon Payload: Clan ER Laser, 3 Clan Large Pulse Lasers

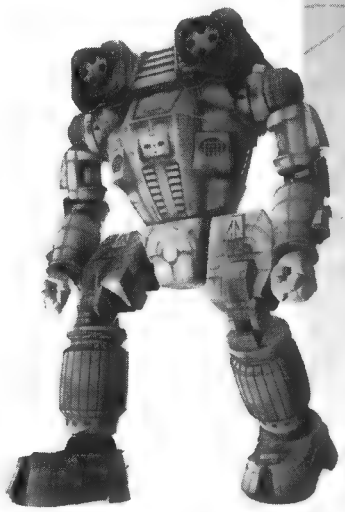
The *Shadow Cat* is a frequent enemy in the *Desperate Measures* campaign. It's light and fast enough to serve as a scout, but heavy enough to deal good damage in a fire support role. Its weapons are efficient but not overwhelming, so in combat it does best as a member of a large group, especially when it lags somewhat behind the heavier hitters.

When you salvage *Shadow Cats,* feel free to use them, especially to replace Inner Sphere designs. They'll rank among the very fastest 'Mechs in your Force Group, but more than a few is usually a bad idea because of the *Shadow Cats'* "in-between" size and durability. You should initially replace your mid-sized Inner Sphere 'Mechs with *Shadow Cats,* then gradually try to replace your *Shadow Cats* with heavier *Thors* and *Mad Cats.*

A *Shadow Cat* is functional as a scout, though for pure scouting purposes a *Stiletto* is much better; on the other hand, a *Shadow Cat* is functional as a general combat 'Mech.

Hunchback IIc

Weight: 50 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Jump: 67 meters



Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	160	35.5	25	52	57,530
Jump	96	35.5	25	52	57,130
Weapons	96	45.5	37	72	77,450

Armor, Jump Payloads: Clan Heavy Ultra Autocannon, Clan Heavy Flamer, 2 Clan ER Lasers, Clan Pulse Laser

Weapon Payload: 2 Clan Heavy Ultra Autocannons, Clan Heavy Flamer, Clan ER Laser

The *Hunchback IIc* actually isn't a true Clan design, but rather a Star League-era model that has been modified and refitted by the Clans. This accounts for certain shortcomings in the design that aren't present in other Clan 'Mechs of similar tonnage.

For example, in an unusual departure, the *Hunchback IIc* is actually less armored than its direct Inner Sphere equivalent, the *Hunchback*. However, the armor discrepancy is minor, and the *Hunchback IIc* more than makes up for this shortcoming with the extra tonnage it devotes to weapons.

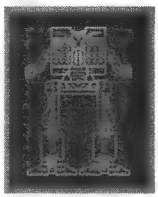
More significantly, the *Hunchback IIc* is just as sluggish as its Inner Sphere counterpart. This is in stark contrast to most heavy Clan 'Mechs, which are very nimble despite their bulk. The end result is a 'Mech that bears an uncanny resemblance to the standard Inner Sphere *Hunchback*.

The chief difference between the *Hunchback* and the *Hunchback IIc* is that the Inner Sphere design makes great sacrifices in weapon range and diversity just to pack the Heavy Autocannon on board. The Clan variant, on the other hand, has enough room to fit the Heavy Autocannon on board and pack a respectable array of support weapons.

The Weapon variant of the *Hunchback IIc* is particularly noteworthy, packing an amazing two Clan Heavy Ultra Autocannons onto a 50-ton frame. While a 'Mech configured this way is guaranteed to run out of ammunition in no time flat, it's also guaranteed to be a daunting foe while the ammo lasts.

If you see a *Hunchback IIc* on the battlefield, it goes without saying that you should keep your 'Mechs as far away from it as possible. Because it doesn't share the remarkable speed of other heavy Clan 'Mechs, you'll have a good chance of maintaining the desired extreme range.

Vulture



Weight: 60 tons
Speed: 24 m/sec
Jump: 83 meters

Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	168	46	29	49	56,910
Jump	136	46	29	49	62,610
Weapons	136	52	36	55.5	61,870

Armor, Jump Payloads: 2 Clan Large Pulse Lasers, 8 Clan LRM Racks
Weapon Payload: 2 Clan Large ER Lasers, 8 Clan LRM Racks, 2 Clan Pulse Lasers

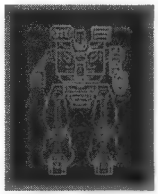
The *Vulture* in its base configuration is a fire-support 'Mech in its purest state. It combines decent armor with the devastating long-range punch of multiple LRM Racks and Large Lasers.

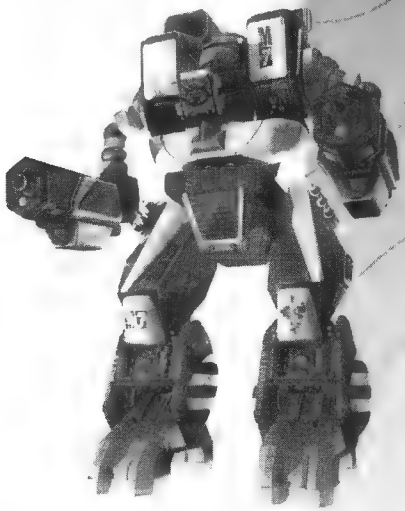
As with all fire-support 'Mechs, the *Vulture* is at its best when it stands well back from the melee and fires its long-range weapons with a devastating effect. It needs to be used in conjunction with tough, well-armored 'Mechs that will handle the close fighting while the *Vulture* hangs back.

A lone *Vulture* has difficulty with enemies who get too close because its LRMs don't fire very quickly—and in its Armor and Jump configurations, it has no weapons that can fire at a point-blank target.

Like many other medium and heavy Clan 'Mechs, the *Vulture* demonstrates remarkable speed for a 'Mech of its tonnage. Whereas the *Hunchback IIc* is just as sluggish as its Inner Sphere counterpart, the *Vulture* and most other heavy Clan 'Mechs are surprisingly fast.

Loki





Weight: 65 tons
Speed: 24 m/sec
Jump: 83 meters

Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	192	50.5	29.25	59.3	70,540
Jump	128	50.5	29.25	59.3	74,760
Weapons	128	56.5	29	63.3	80,120

Armor, Jump Payloads: Clan ER-PPC, 4 Clan ER Lasers, 2 Clan Streak SRM Packs, Clan Ultra Autocannon

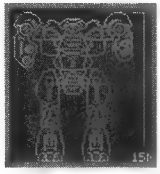
Weapon Payload: 2 Clan Gauss Rifles, 2 Clan Large ER Lasers, 2 Clan Streak SRM Packs

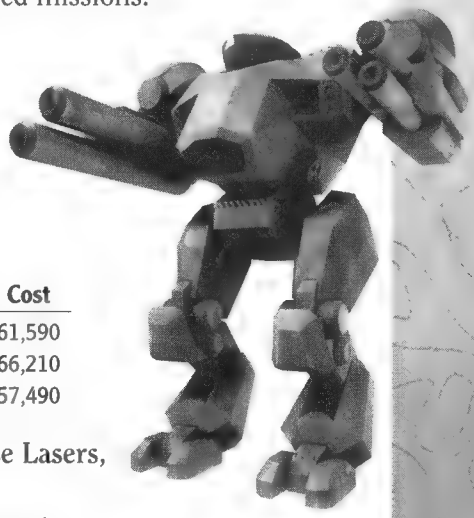
The *Loki* is a typical heavy Clan 'Mech. It exhibits the same unusual speed of other heavy Clan 'Mechs, it has a daunting weapons payload, and it can stand toe to toe with Inner Sphere 'Mechs that outweigh it by 10 tons.

In its Armor and Jump configurations, the *Loki* has an interesting mix of short- and long-range power. These models fight most comfortably at medium range, where most of their weapons systems can be employed simultaneously.

The *Loki*'s Weapon configuration is much more geared toward extreme-range fighting. Its twin Gauss Rifles deliver unbelievable power, but their severe ammo restrictions make this a risky model to send on prolonged missions.

Nova Cat (Desperate Measures Only)





Weight: 70 tons
Speed: 21 m/sec
Jump: Short

Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	Heavy	54	43	52	61,590
Jump	Moderate	54	43	52	66,210
Weapons	Moderate	58	39	62	57,490

Armor, Jump Payloads: Clan Heavy Flamer, 3 Clan Pulse Lasers, 2 Clan Heavy LB-X Autocannons

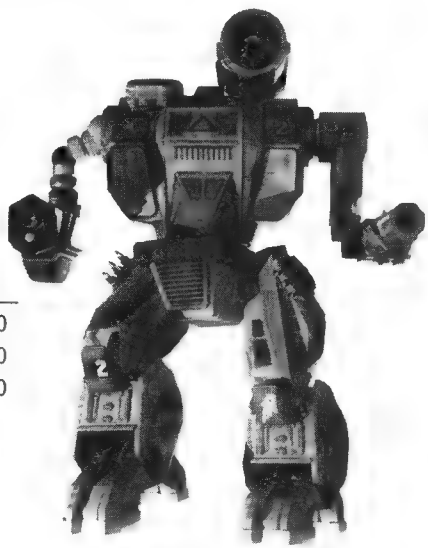
Weapon Payload: Clan Pulse Laser, 4 Clan Streak SRM Packs, 2 Clan Heavy LB-X Autocannons

The *Nova Cat* is a potent new Clan design. It isn't as overwhelmingly fast as many other heavy Clan 'Mechs, but its speed is still better than Inner Sphere 'Mechs of comparable size. It also enjoys the typical Clan advantage in weapon payload over Inner Sphere 'Mechs.

When fighting *Nova Cats,* stay away; it's as simple as that. If you don't, their combination of good armor and devastating Heavy LB-X Autocannons will shred your 'Mechs in minutes. Fight from long range whenever possible, and remember: There's no shame in running away!

If you salvage *Nova Cats,* they make serviceable additions to your fighting group. By all means, use them instead of Inner Sphere designs. However, if you have other heavy Clan designs to choose from, such as *Lokis, Thors* and *Mad Cats,* we recommend those designs because of their superior speed.

Thor



Weight: 70 tons
Speed: 24 m/sec
Jump: 83 meters

Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	224	53.5	45.25	69.3	74,390
Jump	152	53.5	45.25	69.3	78,130
Weapons	152	58	42.25	69.7	79,870

Armor, Jump Payloads: Clan Heavy Ultra Autocannon, Clan Streak SRM Packs, Clan Pulse Laser, 2 Clan Large Pulse Lasers

Weapon Payload: Clan Heavy Ultra Autocannon, 2 Clan Streak SRM Packs, Clan Pulse Laser, 2 Clan Ultra Autocannons

The *Thor* is tough, quite well armored, and carries an unusual mix of weaponry. It's also just as fast as a *Vulture.*

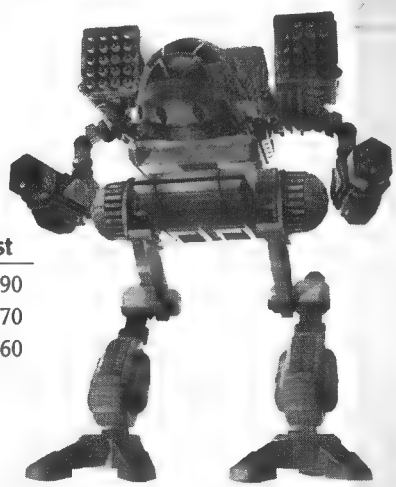
Instead of concentrated damage at a single range, the *Thor* opts for a mix of weapons. Its Heavy Ultra Autocannon provides incredible power at short range until

its ammo runs out, and its Autocannons or Large Pulse Lasers give it medium-range punch. Miscellaneous Lasers and Streak SRMs round out the lot.

The *Thor* is definitely an unusual design. If you opt to use it in its base weapon configurations, you should try to employ it at close range until the Heavy Ultra Autocannon's ammo runs out. Then fight at medium range, where it's less vulnerable.

Better still, refit the *Thor* as a long-range threat. With its great speed, it can usually maintain long range and thus take advantage of such weapons.

Mad Cat



Weight: 75 tons
Speed: 24 m/sec
Jump: 83 meters

Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	256	57.5	42	62.8	92,790
Jump	192	57.5	42	62.8	96,970
Weapons	192	65	40.5	72.7	95,560

Armor, Jump Payloads: 2 Clan ER-PPCs, Clan Large Pulse Laser, Clan Heavy Flamer, 4 Clan LRM Racks

Weapon Payload: 2 Clan ER-PPCs, 2 Clan Large Pulse Lasers, 4 Clan LRM Racks, Clan Pulse Laser

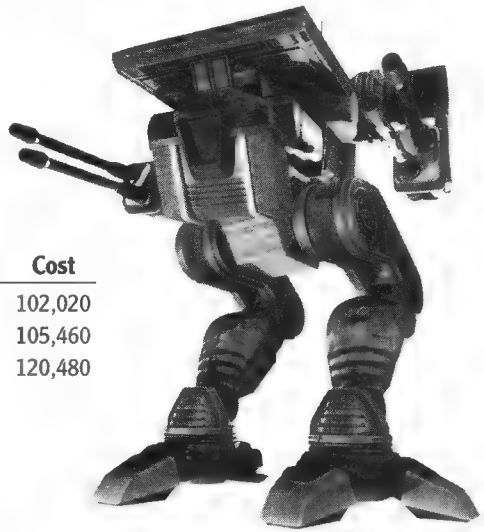
The *Mad Cat* is an intimidating foe. It's extremely well armored and carries a chilling amount of weaponry. Yet, despite its heavy tonnage, it manages to maintain the same running speed as a 45-ton *Hollander II*. It's this combination of speed and power that makes the *Mad Cat* a disheartening opponent—or to put it another way, an opponent without weaknesses.

The *Mad Cat*'s weapon payload is beyond reproach. Its ER-PPCs and LRM Racks allow it to fight at extreme range, exploiting its great speed by maintaining that range throughout combat. Large Pulse Lasers also are useful at long range, while a Heavy Flamer (for the Armor and Jump variants) and a Pulse Laser (for the Weapon variant) handle the occasional short-range target.

Whatever weapons it carries, the *Mad Cat* is a formidable BattleMech. If you manage to get control of one, you should use it at every opportunity: it's a 'Mech with many strengths and no liabilities to speak of.

Masakari

Weight: 85 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Jump: 67 meters



Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	264	69	43.5	77.7	102,020
Jump	216	69	43.5	77.7	105,460
Weapons	216	74	53.5	82.7	120,480

Armor, Jump Payloads: 2 Clan ER-PPCs, 2 Clan Large Pulse Lasers, 2 Clan Heavy Flamers, 2 Clan LRM Racks

Weapon Payload: 2 Clan ER-PPCs, 2 Clan Gauss Rifles, 2 Clan Heavy Flamers, 2 Clan LRM Racks

Whereas most heavy Clan 'Mechs maintain a vast speed advantage over Inner Sphere designs of similar weights, the *Masakari* is an exception. This makes it less versatile than the lean and mean *Mad Cat,* which can be literally brought along on any mission—even those requiring great speed—without becoming a liability.

Despite this shortcoming, the *Masakari* is still a formidable BattleMech. Its armor and ability to carry weapons is squarely on par with the Inner Sphere's 100-ton *Atlas*, over which it does enjoy a speed advantage. This makes it a tough opponent.

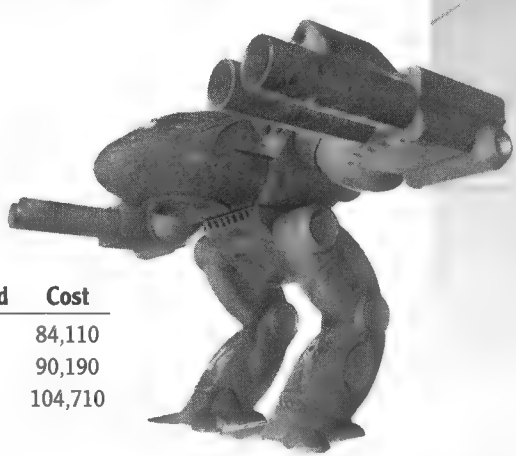
In their base configurations, the Armor and Jump variants of the *Masakari* are geared toward long-range combat. Twin ER-PPCs and twin LRM Racks, plus a pair of Large Pulse Lasers, enable the *Masakari* to chew up opponents before they close to short range and prevent nimble enemies from exploiting the *Masakari*'s lack of speed. Up close, twin Heavy Flamers pose a formidable threat.

The Weapon variant ditches the Large Pulse Lasers in favor of a pair of massive Gauss Rifles. This configuration makes the *Masakari* a master of long-range combat, but also makes it somewhat vulnerable to ammunition shortages.

Make no mistake, the *Masakari* is an extremely powerful force. It's extremely useful in certain missions where speed isn't an issue, but many missions in *Desperate Measures* do in fact demand speed—so you'll want to mothball it for those missions.

Turkina (Desperate Measures Only)

Weight: 95 tons
Speed: 15 m/sec
Jump: Short



Variant	Armor Points	Payload	Alpha Strike	10-Second	Cost
Armor	Heavy	74	32	72.8	84,110
Jump	Heavy	74	32	72.8	90,190
Weapons	Very Heavy	81	44.5	75.1	104,710

Armor, Jump Payloads: Clan Pulse Laser, 2 Clan LB-X Autocannons, 2 Clan Large ER Lasers, 2 Clan LRM Racks, 2 Clan Light LB-X Autocannons

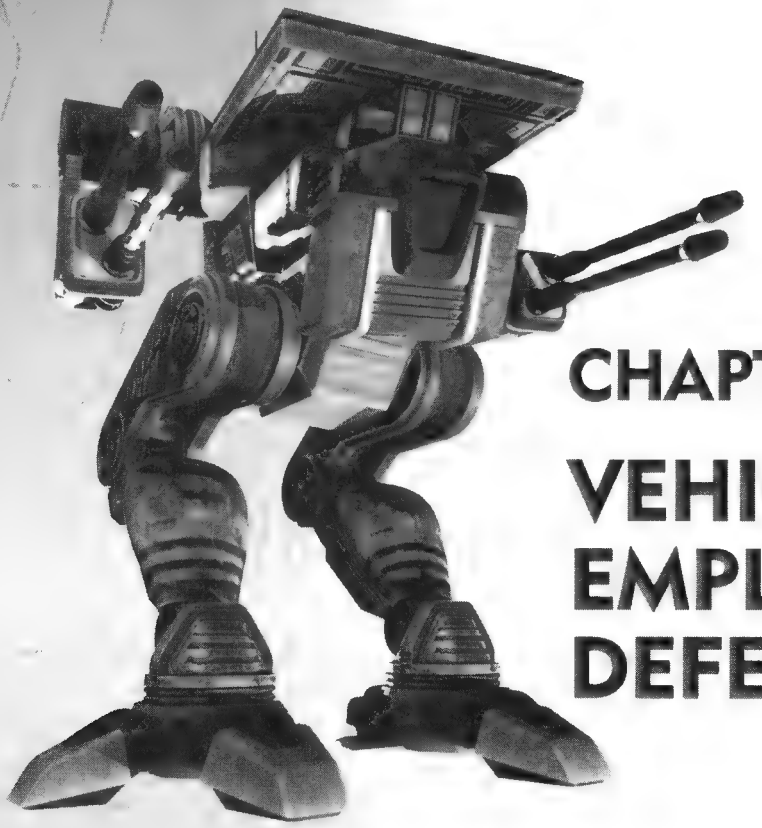
Weapon Payload: Clan Pulse Laser, 2 Clan LB-X Autocannons, 2 Clan ER-PPCs, 2 Clan LRM Racks, 2 Clan Light LB-X Autocannons

The *Turkina* is an unusually wide 'Mech design with extremely potent firepower at its disposal. As a pure offensive force it's hard to beat; it can carry more tons of weaponry than the average 'Mech weighs in total.

The *Turkina* is almost as heavy as the Inner Sphere's *Atlas.* Although it's clearly the superior design, it's limited by its extremely low speed. Its plethora of long-range weapons, however, save it from being vulnerable to faster enemies that remain outside its firing radius.

When attacking a *Turkina,* be sure to clear out all other opposition in the vicinity first. Then group-attack it. If you have 'Mechs that are capable of attacking at short range, do so—because many of the *Turkina's* weapons won't fire at extremely close range. Otherwise hang back at long range and keep moving.

If you capture a *Turkina,* the temptation to use it will be great. But again, bear in mind that many of the new missions require speed, something that the *Turkina* doesn't have. If you decide to use it for a mission, make sure that you maintain the *Turkina's* long-range emphasis. If you load it up with short-range weapons, it'll have a hard time getting close enough to enemies to bring its weapons to bear.



CHAPTER 4

VEHICLES AND EMPLACED DEFENSES

BattleMechs aren't the only foes you'll face. Elementals, vehicles, and emplaced defenses such as Turrets are commonplace—in fact, in many missions they're more common than BattleMechs. The reasons for this are obvious: BattleMechs are complex, costly units that require vast resources to create and maintain. Furthermore, factories that produce BattleMechs are relatively rare. Vehicles, Elementals, and emplaced defenses, although not as potent or versatile as BattleMechs, represent a highly cost-effective way of fighting.

This chapter provides detailed information on the non-'Mech forces you'll encounter throughout your campaigns. Enemy vehicles and defenses vary widely in capability, and you'll become a better MechCommander if you learn to distinguish them.

VEHICLE ROSTER

The following pages shed light on every common weapon-bearing vehicle you'll encounter in your campaign. You'll also learn about important unarmed vehicles, such as the Mobile HQ and the Aerospace Spotter. The only vehicles that aren't covered in these pages are unique (mission-specific) vehicles and vehicles with no distinctive capabilities: civilian cars, unarmed trucks, and so forth. Thus, if you encounter a vehicle that isn't listed in these pages, it's likely to be a common civilian vehicle with no armament and no tactical significance.

TIP *Vehicles are slowed down by terrain that doesn't affect BattleMechs. Specifically, vehicles slow down when traveling up a hill. Keep this in mind when considering a vehicle's top speed.*

Vehicles Available from Battalion

The following vehicles may all be purchased from Battalion. They aren't always available, but you can buy them all at one time or another.

The enemy can and does employ these vehicles on occasion. Become familiar with them so you can command or destroy them with equal proficiency.

Swiftwind Scout Car

Weight: 5 tons
Speed: 21 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 25
Cost: 1,000 RP
Weapons: Vehicle Sensor

The *Swiftwind* Scout Car is little more than a sensor array on wheels. Its name suggests blazing speeds, but in reality the *Swiftwind* isn't the fastest thing on the battlefield. It'll outrun the majority of opponents but can be overtaken by swift BattleMechs.

The chief use for the *Swiftwind* is as an early warning system. You can drive it into enemy-controlled areas and use its superior sensors to get a good sense of what's there before committing your main forces to an attack.

Swiftwinds also can be used to distract and confuse the enemy, drawing enemy 'Mechs away from a location you intend to attack with your main army.

TIP *If you have five spare tons, a* Swiftwind *can be useful for scouting. But don't try to integrate this vehicle into your plans for every mission; there are other, faster units that can serve as scouts.*

Enemy-controlled *Swiftwinds* sometimes act as spotters for larger forces.

Ammo Truck (Desperate Measures Only)

Weight: 10 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 50
Weapons: None
Cost: 1,500 RP

The Ammo Truck can travel along with your Force Group and resupply 'Mechs' ammunition. This makes it more limited than a Refit Truck, which restores both ammunition and armor. However, the Ammo Truck weighs a lot less than the Refit Truck. It is also combustible and a clever MechCommander can use this as an offensive tactic.

If your 'Mechs use lots of heavy, ammo-eating weapons like Gauss Rifles or various Heavy Autocannons, an Ammo Truck is a good idea. This is particularly true in missions featuring low drop weight and few Repair Bays.

If your 'Mechs use mostly energy weapons, or if the mission features lots of Repair Bays, the Ammo Truck might be unnecessary.

Finally, if you anticipate the need for extra ammo but the mission's drop weight is quite high, consider a Refit Truck instead. Its ability to repair armor, as well as replenish ammo, is well worth the extra tonnage.

Pegasus Light Scout Tank

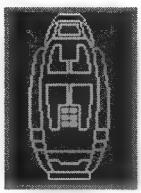
Weight: 15 tons
Speed: 21 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 50
Cost: 3,100 RP
Weapons: 3 SRM Packs, Vehicle Sensor

The *Pegasus* is a moderately fast, lightly armored tank with vehicle-class sensors. Think of it as a slightly better-protected *Swiftwind* with minimal offensive capabilities to boot.

The *Pegasus'* three SRM Packs aren't going to chew a hole in most 'Mechs, but they're adequate for destroying small buildings, small vehicles, and very light emplaced defenses. Thus, a lone *Pegasus* can be useful for sneaking behind the enemy and taking out key buildings, bridges, or other vital structures.

TIP *When examining the* Pegasus *(and all other weapon-bearing vehicles) bear in mind that you can't compare 'Mechs and vehicles of the same tonnage on an equal basis. Vehicles simply aren't as potent—and can't carry as many weapons—as a 'Mech. This makes the* Pegasus *a vehicle that you should generally avoid taking.*

Centipede Scout Car (Desperate Measures Only)

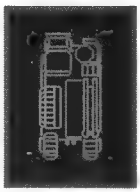


Weight: 15 tons
Speed: 21 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 50
Cost: 8,580 RP
Weapons: Large Laser, Advanced Vehicle Sensor, Guardian ECM

The *Centipede* is a superior scout to the *Pegasus* Light Scout Tank. It's just as fast, it carries a weapon with better range, and its combination of Advanced Vehicle Sensors and Guardian ECM make it better at both detecting and eluding enemies. Thus, if you're going to spend 15 tons of drop weight on a scout vehicle, it's best to take this one.

However, if you're truly serious about scouting, and your mission features a high drop weight, you might consider buying a *Stiletto J* instead. The *Stiletto J* costs and weighs more, but it's much more durable, capable of jumping long distances, and capable of outrunning any foe on the battlefield, bar none. Plus, it can play a useful role in combat, particularly when it hangs back and uses long-range weapons in a fire support role. This makes it the ultimate scout.

Refit Truck



Weight: 35 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 50
Cost: 4,500 RP
Weapons: None

Refit Trucks restock the ammunition of depleted 'Mech weapons and perform repairs to 'Mech armor and internal structures. The repair process requires the 'Mech to temporarily power down.

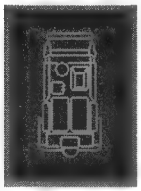
The Refit Truck doesn't have a glamorous task, but it's a vital one. Most missions feature pauses in which you have time to make repairs—and if you have a Refit Truck you can make the most of that time, repairing your 'Mechs to nearly pristine condition.

More importantly, Refit Trucks pave the way for you to use potent weapons such as Gauss Rifles and Heavy Autocannons, which are typically hindered by their low ammunition. With a Refit Truck, you can safely use such weapons, confident in the knowledge that you can replenish the ammo supply when it runs low.

Refit Trucks are best used in missions that allow you lots of drop weight and feature pauses during which you can repair your 'Mechs. In missions with very limited drop weights, you might want to skip the Refit Truck and just use those 35 tons to add another BattleMech instead.

TIP *If a mission is giving you problems, and those problems seem to stem from a lack of weapon power, consider using a Refit Truck and loading your 'Mechs up with Heavy Autocannons and Gauss Rifles. This often does the trick.*

Minelayer



Weight: 40 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 75
Cost: 9,000 RP
Weapons: Mines

The Minelayer is capable of creating vast minefields that damage enemies passing through them. Friendly units aren't affected by these mines.

Mines are laid in neat squares that cover a good deal of terrain; once a unit enters a square, the mines in that square are detonated. Two mine squares can destroy most vehicles, while three or four can severely damage a medium-sized 'Mech.

Minelayers are extremely useful in defensive missions, as they can effectively close off certain approaches to the spot you're trying to defend. Mines work best in locales with mountains or forest; wide-open plains require lots of time to mine thoroughly.

The Minelayer is a fairly swift vehicle, but when laying mines it automatically slows down—that's just how its mine-laying mechanism works. So, if you want to get the most out of your Minelayer, you should never order it to lay mines at a spot too distant from its current position. Instead, order it to move at full speed to the spot where the mines are to be laid, then give the order to actually lay mines.

TIP *The Minelayer is useful in a few missions from the original* MechCommander, *but isn't needed in any* Desperate Measures *missions.*

Minesweeper

Weight: 40 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 100
Cost: 4,000 RP
Weapons: None

A Minesweeper is the best antidote to a Minelayer. While the Minelayer produces minefields, it's the Minesweeper's job to safely clear them away.

Minesweepers automatically detonate minefields as they cross them. Although they detonate the mines in such a way as to minimize damage, they do take damage in the process and are destroyed after clearing numerous mines.

TIP *Again, the Minesweeper isn't needed in* Desperate Measures *missions. You'll encounter a few minefields in these missions, but they're small enough that you can simply avoid them or detonate them with weapon fire directed at the ground.*

Other Enemy Vehicles

The remaining vehicles detailed in this chapter aren't available to Battalion, so you can't purchase them. Nor can you salvage vehicles from combat as you would salvage a 'Mech. Therefore, barring any special circumstances, you'll always find yourself fighting against the following vehicles instead of commanding them.

Because the remaining vehicles are, for the most part, available in multiplayer, there is a "Cost" entry present. Also, there's a "Behavior" entry that describes what the driver of each vehicle is likely to do in combat. There are occasionally variations in behavior based on individual drivers or specific mission conditions, but in general you'll find that these vehicles behave in the way we describe.

Long-Range Tanks

The Clans and their Bondsmen employ numerous tanks, many of which are specialized for long-range fighting. These tanks run the gamut from light weapon platforms like the *Saracen* to potent monsters like the *Shrek*.

Saracen

Weight: 35 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 50
Weapons: 2 Light Autocannons
Cost: 3,920 RP
Behavior: Maintains long range

The *Saracen* is a pesky beast that's easy to dispatch if you attack it in force. Its armor is thin, and its twin Light Autocannons aren't particularly formidable. The key is simply to finish off the *Saracen* quickly because—despite their low damage—the Light Autocannons fire rapidly.

Striker

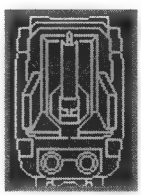
Weight: 35 tons
Speed: 15 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 75
Weapons: 5 LRM Racks
Cost: 10,200 RP
Behavior: Comes to a halt when firing; distributes fire among multiple targets

Strikers are particularly annoying enemies. They're much like an LRM Carrier, save that they carry fewer missiles and possess tougher armor. The range of their LRMs ensures that they'll always get in a shot or two, but it also ensures that they're virtually defenseless when your forces get too close (inside the LRMs' minimum firing radius).

Worse still, *Strikers'* LRM payload allows them to sit behind tall concrete walls or other reinforced barriers—because, as all good MechCommanders know, missiles are capable of flying over such obstacles.

When attacking *Strikers,* try to get as close as possible and maintain a direct line of fire. If your 'Mechs possess their own LRMs, however, this is less of an issue; they can dispatch a *Striker* with their own missile volleys.

Regulator Hover Tank (Desperate Measures Only)

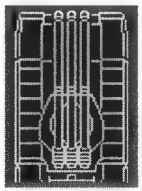


Weight: 45 tons
Speed: 21 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 75
Weapons: Gauss Rifle
Cost: 17,250 RP
Behavior: Maintains long range

The *Regulator* is a tough long-range attacker. Although not as durable as some of the heavier tanks you'll face, the *Regulator* nonetheless demands attention, thanks mainly to its damaging Gauss Rifle.

As usual with vehicles packing long-range weapons, the ideal scenario is to approach so close that the *Regulator's* long-range Gauss Rifle is ineffective. Barring that, you should attack quickly and decisively with all of your 'Mechs.

Pilum Heavy Tank (Desperate Measures Only)



Weight: 70 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 100
Weapons: 6 LRM Racks
Cost: 12,560 RP
Behavior: Snipe from long range

This heavy, missile-bearing tank is a dangerous foe. Think of it as a faster, tougher version of an LRM Carrier, and you'll see why it's dangerous.

As always with LRM-carrying vehicles, the ideal tactic is to run to close range, inside the minimum range of enemy LRMs. From there your 'Mechs can safely pound away at the *Pilum* and take no return fire. If your 'Mechs aren't geared for short-range combat, fight at long range and overwhelm the *Pilum* with multiple 'Mechs' fire.

Von Luckner

Weight: 75 tons
Speed: 12 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 100
Weapons: Gauss Rifle, Light Autocannon
Cost: 18,260 RP
Behavior: Comes to a halt when firing; never retreats

Von Luckners belong to that rare class of vehicles that 'Mechs must fear. Although a 75-ton *Von Luckner* is nothing compared to a 75-ton 'Mech (such as a *Mad Cat*), its twin long-range weapons make it a legitimate threat. The Gauss Rifle in particular is a heavy hitter, capable of tearing holes in even the thickest and most pristine armor.

As with other long-range tanks, a good policy with the *Von Luckner* is to approach as quickly as possible and destroy it immediately with concentrated fire—or at least get inside the minimum firing radius of the dreaded Gauss Rifle. This shouldn't be terribly difficult for medium or small 'Mechs to achieve, because the *Von Luckner* is a sluggish vehicle.

Shrek

Weight: 80 tons
Speed: 9 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 125
Weapons: Clan ER-PPC, ER-PPC
Cost: 30,660 RP
Behavior: Comes to a halt when firing; distributes fire among multiple targets

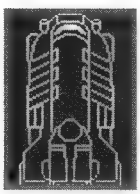
The *Shrek* is even more formidable than the *Von Luckner,* and is one of the toughest vehicles you'll face. Its twin ER-PPCs (one Clan, one Inner Sphere) are a downright devastating combination. The Clan ER-PPC in particular is one of the finest all-around weapons in existence, and the Inner Sphere variant is potent as well.

The *Shrek* fires slowly because of the slow recycle speed of its weapons, but when it does fire, your 'Mechs are in serious trouble.

As with all vehicles, the *Shrek* must be destroyed quickly. However, destroying the *Shrek* requires concentrated fire because of its potent armor, which ranks as the thickest on any vehicle.

If the *Shrek* has any weakness, it's the combination of slow speed and long-range weapons. Most BattleMechs are fast enough to quickly get inside the PPCs' minimum firing radius and stay there, where the *Shrek* can do no harm.

Alacorn MK VII Heavy Tank (Desperate Measures Only)



Weight: 95 tons
Speed: 12 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 150
Weapons: 3 Gauss Rifles
Cost: 47,450 RP
Behavior: Maintains medium to long range

The *Alacorn,* an old Star League-era design, is the deadliest vehicle you'll face. You can't fall into the trap of thinking "It's just a vehicle," because at 95 tons and carrying three hyper-potent Gauss Rifles, the *Alacorn* is a legitimate threat to any 'Mech.

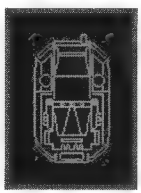
There's no perfect way to deal with an *Alacorn,* but some tactics are better than others. If your 'Mechs are geared toward long-range combat, engage the *Alacorn* at long range with all 'Mechs simultaneously, but keep them moving at all times to minimize Gauss Rifle hits.

If any of your 'Mechs are geared toward short-range combat, you'll fare much better, however. Approach the *Alacorn* to point-blank range and stay there, pounding it and moving along with it so it can't get away. Its Gauss Rifles can't fire at targets within 50 meters, so your close-range attackers will be safe.

Medium-Range Tanks

Medium-range tanks can't match the all-out fury of the awe-inspiring *Shrek* or *Alacorn,* but they include a pair of formidable enemies nonetheless. The *Condor, Manticore,* and *Rommel* all pack a serious punch; the *Rommel* in particular can give lone 'Mechs problems.

Condor Heavy Hover Tank



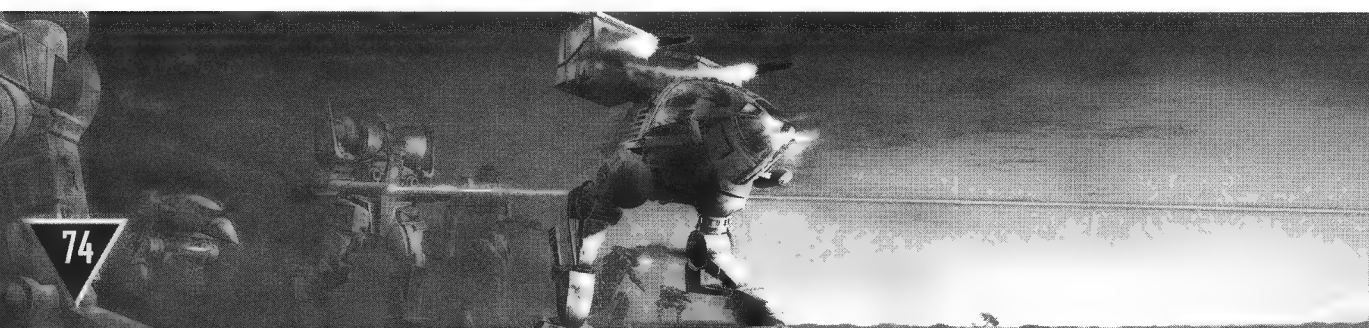
Weight: 50 tons
Speed: 15 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 75
Weapons: Clan Large Pulse Laser
Cost: 9,410 RP
Behavior: Sticks close to target

The *Condor* Heavy Hover Tank is an average mid-range fighter. Its Clan Large Pulse Laser doesn't pack a huge punch but it's fast and efficient and possesses good range.

Groups of *Condors* are deceptively tough. As usual, the best defense is simply to concentrate fire on them and get rid of them quickly.

Manticore Heavy Tank (Desperate Measures Only)

Weight: 60 tons
Speed: 15 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 75
Weapons: PPC, Large Pulse Laser, 2 SRM Packs
Cost: 13,870 RP
Behavior: Maintains medium range



The *Manticore* is a formidable medium-range threat, with extra punch at short range if the battle happens to get too close. As you might expect, the best way to handle *Manticores* is to pick them off from extreme range, where they can't fight back. Thanks to the *Manticore's* relatively sluggish speed, this shouldn't be a particularly tough task.

Rommel

Weight: 65 tons
Speed: 12 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 100
Weapons: 2 Autocannons
Cost: 15,700 RP
Behavior: Comes to a halt when firing; never retreats

The *Rommel* is a potent mid-range tank. Its twin Autocannons aren't as formidable as the *Shrek's* paired ER-PPCs, but they're devastating nonetheless. Either dispatch this vehicle from extreme range with LRMs or other long-range weapons, or get close and destroy it quickly with concentrated fire. Whatever you do, don't allow it to remain at mid-range and don't let it hang around too long.

Short-Range Tanks

The list of short-range tanks includes a number of lightweights (such as the *Savannah Master*) but also some true heavyweights (such as the *Bulldog*). Learn to recognize each of these vehicles and deal with them accordingly.

APC

Weight: 10 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 50
Weapons: Laser
Cost: —
Behavior: None

The APC is an unremarkable, lightly armored vehicle with one true purpose: to transport infantry from one place to another. APCs have little or no significance as combat vehicles, but protecting or destroying one is occasionally critical to your mission goals.

The APC is marginally more durable than the *Swiftwind,* but not as fast—so it can neither outrun most enemies nor take much of a beating. It must be protected carefully at all times.

Savannah Master

Weight: 5 tons
Speed: 21 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 15
Weapons: Small Laser
Cost: 1,000 RP
Behavior: Swarms, concentrates fire

The *Savannah Master* is so miniscule as to be almost a non-issue, even when it appears in sizable packs. Whereas it's usually a good strategy to destroy enemy vehicles before concentrating on enemy 'Mechs (simply because the vehicles are more fragile and can be eliminated quickly), it's often a good policy to ignore *Savannah Masters* until all other threats are gone.

When your 'Mechs are swarmed by *Savannah Masters,* just stop and let them target the enemy. If your 'Mechs have a few decent short-range weapons, they'll take out the *Savannah Masters* in a matter of seconds.

The *Savannah Master's* only real asset is its speed.

Armored Car

Weight: 8 tons
Speed: 27 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 20
Weapons: Laser
Cost: —
Behavior: Attempts rear attacks

Armored Cars, much like *Savannah Masters,* should be low on your list of priorities. They're exceptionally fast, but that's their only strength.

Destroy Armored Cars at your convenience, but otherwise don't worry about them.

J. Edgar Light Hover Tank

Weight: 25 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 50
Weapons: 2 Clan Pulse Lasers
Cost: 4,500 RP
Behavior: Circles the target

The *J. Edgar* Light Hover Tank is a marginally effective vehicle sporting moderate armor, moderate weapons, and good speed. If ignored long enough it can cause problems. So, unlike the *Savannah Master* and Armored Car, it should be made a priority—if only a minor one.

J. Edgars are best destroyed from long range.

Harasser

Weight: 25 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 50
Weapons: 4 SRM Packs
Cost: 3,040 RP
Behavior: "Jousts" (drives toward target, passes it while firing, and turns for another shot)†

Harassers are functionally identical to *J. Edgars* save for their weapon payloads and their unusual combat style. Treat them as you would a *J. Edgar.*

Bulldog Medium Tank

Weight: 65 tons
Speed: 12 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 100
Weapons: Heavy Autocannon
Cost: 12,590 RP
Behavior: Gets close to target and never leaves

The *Bulldog* Medium Tank is one of the toughest vehicles you'll face, even though it isn't one of the heaviest. It's a well-armored tank bearing a single Heavy Autocannon, but that lone Heavy Autocannon is more than enough to make it a deadly foe.

Bulldogs are deceptive; they fire infrequently and possess only one weapon, and furthermore don't appear terribly threatening (just as most vehicles don't appear terribly threatening to 'Mechs). But one lucky shot of a Heavy Autocannon can bring down a 'Mech and change the complexion of a mission.

When facing *Bulldogs,* try to maintain medium or long range to prevent them from using their Heavy Autocannons. Have your 'Mechs run if necessary, periodically turning around to fire. *Bulldogs* can never be ignored, and should always be among the very first targets you attack when facing a mixed group of enemies.

Missile Carriers

Two missile carriers are common throughout the Inner Sphere: the SRM Carrier and LRM Carrier. These vehicles are similar to tanks, save that they're less armored than tanks of comparable weight and carry a larger payload.

Because they carry such heavy payloads, missile carriers should be destroyed as quickly as possible. This job is usually easy because of the carriers' light armor—but should you fail for some reason to dispatch these vehicles quickly, the penalty is harsh.

SRM Carrier

Weight: 60 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 25
Weapons: 6 SRM Packs
Cost: 3,210 RP
Behavior: Fires and retreats

A lone 'Mech with decent long-range punch usually can destroy SRM Carriers before they get close enough to fire their missiles.

The SRM Carriers' extremely light armor makes them easy targets. If allowed to hang around, though, they can dish out serious punishment.

LRM Carrier

Weight: 60 tons
Speed: 15 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 50
Weapons: 7 LRM Racks
Cost: 13,420 RP
Behavior: Comes to a halt when firing; distributes fire amongst multiple targets

LRM Carriers are maddening when situated behind heavy walls or other defenses, because they can fire their missiles at you from a spot where most of your 'Mechs' weapons can't reach them. So, the main rule when dealing with LRM Carriers is to cut a path to them as quickly as possible, and not let them pick your forces apart from long range.

Miscellaneous Mobile Threats

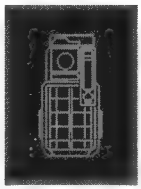
You'll encounter a few other armed vehicles in enemy hands. They aren't as easy to categorize as the tanks and missile carriers, but they can be formidable nonetheless.

Elementals

Weight: 1 ton
Speed: 3 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 3
Weapons: Small Laser or SRM
Cost: —
Behavior: Swarms the enemy

Elementals are not vehicles, but rather, genetically engineered Clan warriors in special powered-armor suits. These warriors don't present a major threat to a company of 'Mechs, but they can damage vehicles and are hard for 'Mechs without short-range weapons to handle. They always appear in swarms, and they don't show up on sensors—so you have to keep a close watch for Elemental ambushes. The best policy to guard against Elementals is simply to make sure that one or more of your 'Mechs has a couple fast-firing, short-range weapons; the Pulse Laser is ideal. With such weapons, you can quickly dispatch a swarm of Elementals. Also, try using the GUARD command and selecting the terrain near the Elementals. The player AI knows how to dispatch them efficiently.

Mobile Field Artillery



Weight: 70 tons
Speed: 15 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 150
Weapons: Artillery
Cost: —
Behavior: None

Mobile Field Artillery is used to deliver artillery strikes against targets that are kilometers away. As it takes a great deal of time to set the unit up to fire, it can't fire when mobile.

Non-Combatant Vehicles

The following vehicles possess no weapons but have strategic significance nonetheless.

Remember that, during certain missions, you'll encounter vehicles that aren't listed here, but they aren't as likely as these to be significant to your mission. (Civilian cars and farm vehicles would fall into this category.)

Cargo Truck

Weight: 40 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 50
Weapons: None
Cost: —
Behavior: Follows designated route

Cargo Trucks possess no weapons but are nonetheless vital to some Jaguar supply lines. Occasionally, you'll be tasked with protecting, capturing, or destroying Cargo Trucks.

Because Cargo Trucks are very fragile, you'll have little trouble destroying them—if you can catch them.

Cargo Trucks usually follow a designated route across the map. Often, they follow a road. Careful reconnaissance of the local road network usually allows you to correctly judge where the Cargo Truck is headed.

Aerospace Spotter

Weight: 45 tons
Speed: 15 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 75
Weapons: None
Cost: —
Behavior: Calls in an air strike; flees if possible

The Aerospace Spotter is a lumbering hulk whose only purpose is to call in air strikes. Destroy it quickly to prevent Aerospace fighters from targeting key structures such as bridges and command posts—or your 'Mechs themselves.

Because Aerospace Spotters are capable of calling in air strikes right on top of your 'Mechs' heads, it's good to keep your 'Mechs moving while fighting a Spotter. You always have a few seconds to move your 'Mechs out of the blast area, but large, slow 'Mechs have difficulty moving fast enough. It's best if they're already in motion when the strike marker appears.

TIP *You can pause the game briefly whenever a strike marker appears, then assign your 'Mechs destinations that'll take them away from the blast. Un-pause the game whenever you're through.*

Also, try not to let your 'Mechs stand in tight clusters when fighting Aerospace Spotters. This is a sure recipe for disaster, because the 'Mechs tend to get in one another's way and practically guarantee that one or more 'Mechs won't make it out of the strike area.

Mobile HQ Vehicle

Weight: 50 tons
Speed: 15 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 75
Weapons: None
Cost: —
Behavior: Flees (usually reveals terrain if captured by enemy)

Mobile HQ Vehicles are mobile command posts. They don't play an active role in most battles, but if you capture an enemy Mobile HQ, you'll usually be rewarded with information, such as a direct view of previously hidden spots on the map.

Fuel Truck

Weight: 55 tons
Speed: 18 m/sec
Total Armor Points: 25
Weapons: None
Cost: —
Behavior: Follows designated route

Fuel Trucks possess no weapons but are highly explosive. Attacking them while they're close to enemy 'Mechs or structures can be highly profitable, but attacking them while they're in the vicinity of your own forces can result in disaster. Fuel Truck explosions are capable of destroying a light 'Mech outright.

If you want to destroy a Fuel Truck, be sure to do so from as far away as possible. Usually you can just ignore Fuel Trucks, and this is often the wisest course of action.

Emplaced Defenses

"Emplaced defenses" include any type of weapon or defensive structure that isn't capable of moving. The most common defenses you'll encounter are walls and Turrets.

Walls

You'll encounter several types of walls throughout your campaigns. Walls designated as *Large Walls* block all weapon fire save for missiles, which are capable of flying over the wall. Other walls aren't as high and can be fired over.

Walls can be destroyed with concentrated weapon fire, though the exact amount of damage a wall can sustain varies from wall to wall. Most walls feature a gate that can be opened either by capturing the relevant Gate Control Building or by weapon fire. Gates are usually a bit weaker than their surrounding walls, and thus can be shot down more quickly—but gates are typically guarded by tough defenses, so destroying a section of wall is often preferable to storming the gate.

Automated Turrets

Most enemy bases are defended by an array of automated Turrets. Most Turrets are linked to a Turret Control Tower. Capturing this tower allows you to take possession of the Turrets, and forces them to fire on your enemies. Destroying the tower renders the Turrets inoperative. (Note that Pop-Up Turrets are independent and never have a Turret Control Tower.)

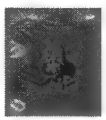
Also, in many cases, you can destroy a nearby Power Generator to render Turrets inoperative.

Laser Turrets

Weapon: Pulse Laser
Range: Short
Armor: 25 points

Laser Turrets are the weakest Turrets you'll encounter. They can be safely destroyed at long range, but they're weak enough that your 'Mechs can wade right through them, ignoring them, if they're in a big enough hurry.

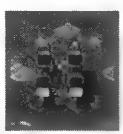
Cannon Turrets



Weapon: Autocannon
Range: Medium
Armor: 30 points

Cannon Turrets are the second tier of Turrets. They're a bit more fragile than Laser Turrets and are capable of dishing out good damage—but again, they can be safely destroyed at long range.

Missile Turrets



Weapon: 4 LRM Racks
Range: Long
Armor: 40 points

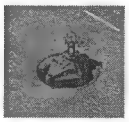
Missile Turrets are the best Turrets available. They fire missiles that deal equivalent damage to multiple LRMs. So, they're fairly heavy hitters and are dangerous to 'Mechs of every size.

Despite their long range, it's indeed possible to shoot down Missile Turrets while standing outside their maximum firing radius. Just order your 'Mechs to attack and then inch them ever closer until the 'Mechs start firing. If this isn't possible because of time restraints or lack of long-range weapons, the next best strategy is to charge in

full speed with a large group of 'Mechs, and destroy the relevant Turret Control Tower. The final option is to destroy the Turrets themselves, though this should only be done if there are no other options.

Artillery Turrets (Desperate Measures Only)

Weapon: Long Tom Artillery Gun
Range: Long
Armor: 50 Points



Artillery Turrets are the most damaging turrets of all. When your 'Mechs get too close, they'll pop out of the ground and fire damaging artillery shells that affect everything within their sizable blast radius. These enhanced Long Tom shells are capable of severely damaging even a medium or heavy 'Mech.

Artillery Turrets look like flat discs until your forces approach too close, at which time the artillery gun itself pops out and fires. These Turrets *can* be attacked from outside their maximum firing range, and they *can* be attacked even if the artillery gun itself hasn't popped up.

You can and should destroy Artillery Turrets before approaching the base they defend—unless you can sneak in from behind, outside of the Artillery Turrets' range, and capture their Turret Control Tower. In this case they make a valuable ally.

Pop-Up Turrets

Weapon: Variable
Range: Variable
Armor: Variable

Pop-Up Turrets come in the same configurations as standard Turrets (except for Artillery Turrets). The chief distinction of Pop-Up Turrets is that they're hidden underground until an enemy enters their firing radius, at which time they pop up and attack. Skilled MechCommanders can learn to identify Pop-Up Turrets before they reveal themselves, but it takes time to identify the signs.

Pop-Up Turrets are autonomous, and are never linked to a Turret Control Tower.

Vehicles and Non-'Mechs in Summary

Ultimately, vehicles will never replace BattleMechs—but that doesn't mean they're worthless. A lone *Commando* left to handle a pair of *J. Edgar* tanks, for example, has its work cut out for it.

Enemy vehicles are seldom heavy hitters, but that's usually not their role. Their job is to wear down your 'Mechs to the point where enemy 'Mechs can finish them off.

Your job, on the other hand, is to learn to recognize enemy vehicles, distinguish among them, and employ an effective strategy to destroy them. An Armored Car is a much different threat from a LRM Carrier, and a *Bulldog* is completely different from a *Shrek*.

The best thing about enemy vehicles is that they're specialized. Most carry only one sort of weapon, and those with multiple weapons tend to have weapons that all focus on the same range. Thus, you can foil vehicles with extreme-range weapons (*Shreks,* LRM Carriers) simply by getting within kicking distance of them, and you can foil short-range vehicles (*Bulldogs,* SRM Carriers) by destroying them before they get close enough to use their weapons.

The other key when fighting vehicles is to remember that concentrated fire will destroy them even more quickly than a BattleMech. Therefore it's usually a good idea to gang all your 'Mechs up on an enemy vehicle and remove it from the picture as quickly as possible.

If you learn to recognize vehicles and deal with them appropriately, your missions will flow much more smoothly.

CHAPTER 5
COMBAT

Every combat engagement has a distinct character and its own set of rules. Although you can't be prepared for every subtle nuance of every mission, you can learn a set of general guidelines that help you reach victory regardless of the circumstances. This chapter provides you with just such a set of guidelines. They'll help you prepare for—and overcome—every obstacle that's thrown in your path.

CONFIGURING 'MECHS AND FORCE GROUPS

Before you even start your mission, you'll have to make several decisions. Chief among these decisions is which 'Mechs to bring along and how to equip them.

A truly skilled MechCommander can often succeed without giving too much consideration to these issues, but on particularly difficult missions, it's vital to tap every last resource available to you—and one of those resources is the ability to customize 'Mechs and Force Groups to the task at hand.

Tonnage Considerations

Each mission presents you with a maximum drop weight and a limited number of DropShip slots in which to place 'Mechs or vehicles. You may choose to send a lesser tonnage than the maximum, and collect a bonus of 1,000 Resource Points for every five tons under the maximum you send. Going under the maximum allowable tonnage is often referred to as "low balling."

Most missions can be accomplished using 5 to 10 tons less than you're allocated; many missions can be won even if you low ball them by up to 20 tons. Beyond this, however, you're venturing into dangerous territory.

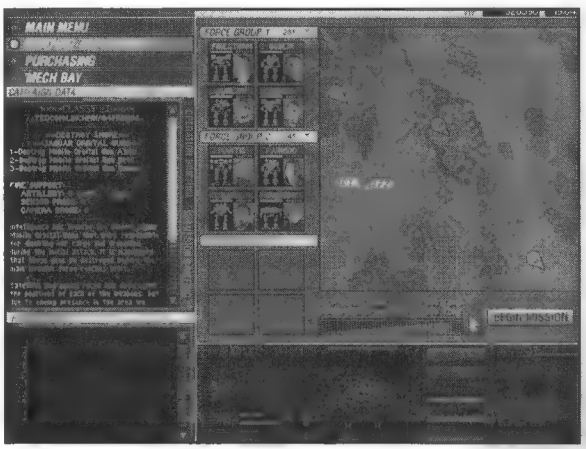


Figure 5-1. This mission's high drop weight is conducive to low balling.

TIP *The* Desperate Measures *missions are typically harder than those of the original campaign, so you should generally use most of your available tonnage on these missions. Also, playing at the Hard difficulty level makes it a lot harder to win without using all available tonnage.*

How much you want to low ball is entirely up to you. Bear in mind, however, that low balling can be dangerous. Aside from the obvious danger that you won't have enough firepower to succeed, there's always the subtler danger that your 'Mechs will get shot up more than usual because they won't have the overwhelming firepower they might have had if you'd used the maximum allowable tonnage. That extra firepower could've been used to dispatch enemies faster, thus allowing them less time to cause expensive damage to your 'Mechs. This, in turn, results in expensive repairs that sometimes neutralize the benefits of low balling the mission—or causes losses that can't be remedied, such as a pilot's death or the loss of a rare Clan weapon.

Light or Heavy 'Mechs?

Generally speaking, if you stage a battle between two 50-ton 'Mechs and four 25-ton 'Mechs, the 50 tonners will win. That's because the 50-ton 'Mechs have heavier armor and are capable of carrying heavier weapons with more concentrated firepower (PPCs and such) that can deal devastating knockout punches to the little 'Mechs.

The smaller 'Mechs, on the other hand, have armor that's weak enough to be completely shredded by one massive weapon strike, and can't carry heavy-hitting weapons that allow them to dispatch an opponent quickly.

TIP *Note that the 50-ton 'Mechs won't always win, but in general they tend to fare better than the smaller 'Mechs.*

Figure 5-2. The Mad Cat **combines high tonnage with high speed, making it a near-perfect 'Mech.**

Thus, you'll usually find that medium to heavy 'Mechs are a good choice in combat-intensive missions. Missions that require lots of running and sneaking around, on the other hand, tend to be easier for light 'Mechs. Often you won't know just how combat intensive a mission is until you're in the middle of it, but usually you'll have some indication before the battle is under way.

When in doubt, lean to the heavy side of the 'Mech spectrum. Heavy 'Mechs are a good choice on all but the most speed-intensive missions, as their superior punch and armor let them dispatch enemies quickly while taking minimal damage in return.

TIP *Because the* Desperate Measures *missions tend to emphasize speed and because we recommend taking fast 'Mechs armed with long-range weapons, we discourage taking the very heaviest 'Mechs along on most* Desperate Measures *missions.*

TIP *Our ideal Force Group would be comprised entirely of* Mad Cats, *which combine excellent size and firepower with excellent speed. Lacking* Mad Cats, *we'd use* Thors *and* Lokis. *If those weren't available, we'd use the durable* Nova Cat, *which isn't quite as fast but is otherwise competent, or* Shadow Cats, *which are less durable but quite fast. And finally, if none of these Clan 'Mechs were available, we'd use* Bushwhackers, *which combine good size with very good speed.*

Special Units

Some missions, especially those from the original *MechCommander* game, require you to bring along a special unit, such as an APC to rescue prisoners or a Minesweeper to clear out minefields. On these missions, you should do your best to protect the special units.

Other missions don't require you to use special units, but they're recommended. In these cases, do yourself a favor and take the special units; they'll make your job a lot easier. Failing to take a Minelayer on a defensive mission where a Minelayer is suggested, for example, can lead to serious headaches. A Minelayer can effectively block multiple passes at once and head off enemy incursions before they get a chance to develop. To deprive yourself of the Minelayer in this case puts you at a real disadvantage.

TIP *Generally speaking, the only non-'Mech units you should take along on* Desperate Measures *missions are Refit Trucks or Ammo Trucks. The others aren't needed. This is different from the original campaign, which occasionally demanded special units.*

Weapon Choices

What weapons should you bring along on any given mission? There are no hard and fast rules to guide you. Certain unique missions might require special weapon payloads, but for most missions, you'll find that any number of weapon strategies will work just fine. One MechCommander might wish to load up on long-range weapons and fight from a distance, while another might choose to attack from close in. Still others might prefer a mix of long-range and short-range attackers.

In summary, there are two main reasons to select a weapon: because you like it and because the mission demands it.

Preferred Weapons

The first class of weapons that you should employ includes those you happen to like. Perhaps you love the long-range punch of PPCs or the sheer devastation of a Heavy Autocannon. How about the raw efficiency of the Clan's lightweight missile systems?

There's a great deal of room for personal choice in weapon selection, and there aren't necessarily any right or wrong answers. There are a few guidelines you'll want to adhere to, though—at least at first. We'll cover those later.

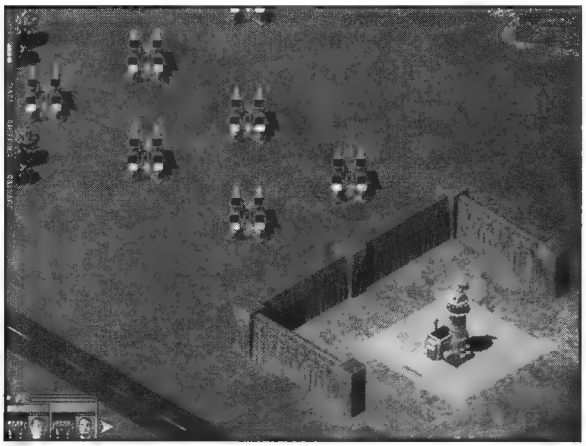


Figure 5-3. These Missile Turrets will pose problems if your 'Mechs don't have long-range weapons to pick them off.

Situational Weapons

The other reason to take particular weapons is because there's some compelling reason to do so in the upcoming mission. Maybe you know there'll be lots of Turrets, so you bring LRMs to pick them apart at long range. Or maybe you know a mission will take place in a particularly enclosed space, so you try to load up on short-range weapons. Any time you've got a clue about what you're up against in your next mission, take full advantage by selecting weapons that excel in the situation you expect.

Weapon Guidelines

Although there's room for personal choice in weapon selection, some weapons are much more versatile than others.

Here are the three main guidelines you should take to heart when choosing your weapons. These aren't hard and fast rules, but you should still think carefully before disregarding them. They've been proven over the course of many, many missions.

Cluster Your Weapons

The first rule of thumb is to cluster your weapons by range, so that most of them can be fired simultaneously. Here are two examples.

Example 1: A MechCommander buys a brand new *Catapult.* Elated, he sticks two of his favorite weapons in it—a Heavy Autocannon and a Gauss Rifle. This more or less

fills up the 'Mech, so no more weapons can be loaded. (Note that filling a 'Mech with only one or two weapons is a bad idea for several reasons, which we'll cover later.)

Unfortunately, however, the *Catapult* now has two great weapons whose ranges hardly overlap. The Gauss Rifle has great range but can't fire at a target inside 50 yards, while the Heavy Autocannon's maximum range is 75 yards. So, if the MechCommander wanted his 'Mech to fight at maximum efficiency (which means using all weapons simultaneously) he'd have to make sure his 'Mech kept within a very specific, narrowly defined radius of his enemies during combat—between 50 and 75 yards. That's tough to accomplish, especially against enemies that move around a lot. The end result is a 'Mech that'll probably only get to use one weapon at a time.

Example 2: The same MechCommander buys a new *Catapult* and loads on a Heavy Autocannon. He also throws on four Lasers. Now he's got a bunch of weapons that all have the same firing range. Once he gets within that range of an enemy, he can unload them all at once. The enemy isn't likely to last very long.

Concentrate the Damage (But Don't Overdo It)

A few powerful weapons that deal heavy damage are usually better against heavy targets than lots of small weapons that deal miniscule damage. Why exactly is that? Here are a few facts that help to explain.

Fact 1: Your ultimate goal when fighting a BattleMech is to pierce its armor and damage the vital internal components that make it work.

Fact 2: Unless you aim for specific body parts, your shots usually don't all hit the same spot on the enemy 'Mech. One shot might hit the left leg, one might hit the right torso, one might hit the left arm, and so forth.

Fact 3: Each different location on the 'Mech's body has its own armor.

What can we learn from these facts? Fact 1 says that your ultimate goal is to puncture the enemy's armor and damage its vital internal components. The most efficient way to do this would be to fire all your weapons at the same location on the 'Mech's body, peel away the armor at that particular spot, and destroy the vital components underneath.

But Fact 2 tells us that this isn't likely to happen. What's much more likely is that you'll end up shooting all different parts of the enemy 'Mech, which is pretty inefficient. Instead of drilling a small hole right to those internal components, you might end up peeling away armor from several parts of the 'Mech but not really damaging it in any significant way.

TIP *You can target a particular spot on the enemy 'Mech, and thus achieve concentrated damage. But targeting individual parts of an enemy 'Mech not only requires your own 'Mechs to stand still while firing, but it's tricky and leads to lots of missed shots. This introduces a different kind of inefficiency. We don't recommend targeted shots for this reason.*

There is, however, a solution. By using heavy-hitting weapons that dish out tremendous damage with a single shot, you guarantee that every time you fire, you'll have a chance of getting at those precious internal components.

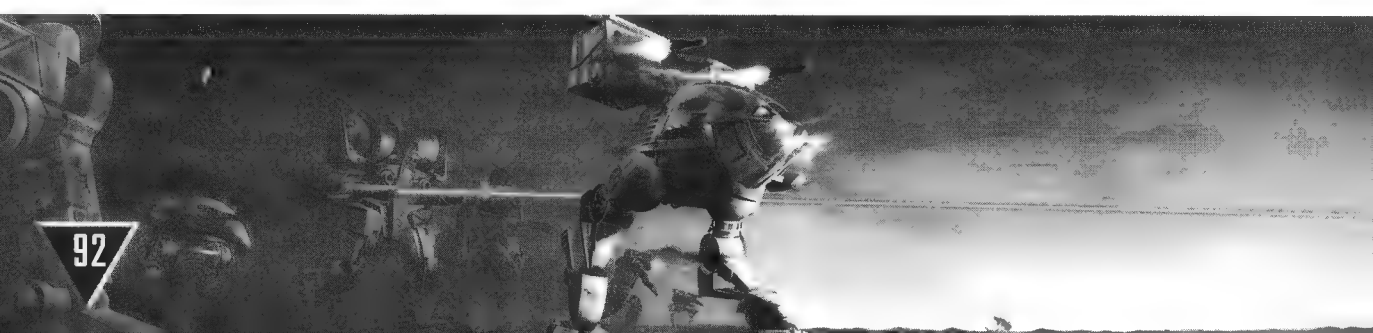
For example, it's possible to walk up to a more or less intact light 'Mech, fire a Heavy Autocannon at it, hit it in the head, and destroy it on the spot. On the other hand, if you were using a bunch of Lasers that dealt equal damage as a Heavy Autocannon, those Lasers would probably hit the target in all different spots. Each hit would deal only two points of damage, and the result would be a 'Mech with slight armor damage to several locations instead of a destroyed 'Mech.

TIP *The only corollary to this rule is not to overdo it and put all your eggs in one basket. If your 'Mech can't carry more than one large weapon (such as a single PPC or Heavy Autocannon), you should probably equip it with smaller weapons instead. A 'Mech with only one weapon runs a significant risk of having that single weapon destroyed—and then the 'Mech is useless for the remainder of the mission.*

Figure 5-4. This 'Mech's Heavy Autocannon is out of ammo, so the 'Mech is now almost useless.

Balance Power and Ammunition

The final weapon guideline is to balance your thirst for power with the hard realities of limited ammunition. Generally speaking, weapons that fire projectiles deal more damage over an extended period of time than energy weapons of comparable weight. Because of this, you'll be tempted to load up on potent Autocannons and Gauss Rifles. But beware the dangers of limited ammunition! 'Mechs equipped only with these weapons tend to be extremely deadly for a short while, but then run out of ammunition and are worthless.



Generally speaking, no 'Mech should carry only projectile weapons unless the mission is certain to be short, or if Repair Bays or Refit Trucks are available. Those 'Mechs that do rely heavily on projectile weapons should use Ammo Conservation fire mode when fighting lesser enemies, and use their full weapons set only against valid threats.

Recommendations

Despite our assurances that most weapons have their uses, we thought you'd probably want specific weapons recommendations. Here they are.

First, understand that we recommend long-range combat over short-range combat. By taking only fast 'Mechs and loading them with almost all long-range weapons, you can avoid confronting enemies with deadly Heavy Autocannons at short range, and you can keep the option to escape open at all times.

Our favorite weapons are the Large X-Pulse Laser and the Clan ER-PPC. Clan LRM Racks and standard LRM Racks are also favorites, especially for missions requiring you to shoot over walls.

Figure 5-4a. Heavy X-Pulse Lasers and Clan ER-PPCs, both seen on this 'Mech, are highly recommended.

The Clan Large ER Laser is also very good, as is the Inner Sphere ER-PPC. Gauss Rifles also can be good if you have access to frequent refits.

If you decide to gear your 'Mechs for shorter-range combat, we recommend the Clan Heavy LB-X Autocannon. It doesn't dish out quite the damage of the Ultra model, but its plentiful ammo supply makes it the best all-purpose heavy Autocannon. Clan Streak SRM Packs are also favorites.

MechWarriors

MechWarriors are important to your plans—almost as important as 'Mechs. MechWarriors with great skills can hit a target more accurately, dodge enemy fire better, and get more range out of their sensors and jump jets than less skilled individuals. They often mean the difference between success and failure.

Hiring and Firing

MechWarriors do all the actual fighting, but it's up to you to decide whom to send into battle. There are a few simple rules to follow when hiring and firing MechWarriors, all of which are outlined in the next few sections.

Never Dismiss a MechWarrior

MechWarriors cost nothing to maintain—all you pay is the initial cost to hire them. Also, there are a finite number of MechWarriors available to you over the course of your campaign, and firing one of them permanently removes him or her from the game. Add up these two facts, and you'll realize that there's seldom a good reason to send a MechWarrior back to Battalion. Sure, you'll get a few Resource Points, but it's not worth the lost potential.

Although you'll want to keep using the same MechWarriors over and over so they'll develop their skills, you never know when one of them might get injured or even killed. Sometimes injuries will deplete your ranks so thoroughly that you'll end up sending MechWarriors you never thought you'd use on a mission. So keep those extra MechWarriors around.

When in Doubt, Don't Hire

Battalion periodically gives you the opportunity to hire new MechWarriors. You should periodically check for new arrivals and hire any with overwhelming skills, but don't feel obligated to hire mediocre MechWarriors the instant they arrive. Once a MechWarrior becomes available he or she will remain available until hired or until the end of the campaign.

Assigning MechWarriors to 'Mechs

Which MechWarrior should pilot which 'Mech? Here are a few simple guidelines that'll help you decide.

Match Good MechWarriors to Good 'Mechs

Your best 'Mechs are even better when good MechWarriors are handling them. If you want your Force Group to operate at maximum efficiency, you should give your best MechWarriors the biggest and most capable BattleMechs.

Bear in mind that the MechWarrior in the point position (leading a Force Group) gets more experience from a mission than those in other positions. Therefore, even though you usually want your best MechWarriors to be in charge of a Force Group in

the biggest 'Mechs, you might want to give slightly less experienced MechWarriors a shot at leadership once in awhile.

Figure 5-5. This Atlas, **which is packed with potent weapons, should be piloted by a great MechWarrior.**

TIP *Generally speaking, a Regular MechWarrior is better than a Green one, a Veteran is better than a Regular, and so forth. But when it's time to evaluate and compare MechWarriors based on their actual skills, bear in mind that Gunnery and Piloting are usually the most important qualities to look for. Enhanced sensor range is nice but unessential, and not all 'Mechs have jumping ability—so Gunnery and Piloting are the skills that come into play most often.*

TIP *Be sure to give your best-shooting MechWarriors the biggest weapons. The more damage a weapon deals with a single shot, the more crucial it is that the shot actually hits the mark. This is especially true when the weapon has limited ammo—so be sure to have skilled MechWarriors pilot 'Mechs with large, limited-ammo weapons.*

Stick with Your MechWarriors

Once you get a few good MechWarriors on your roster, stick with them unless you can hire someone better. Because pilots get better with experience, there's very little reason to keep switching MechWarriors. Just keep using the ones you like, and they'll continue to get better. The exception is if you can hire someone that has visibly better skills than your current MechWarriors.

Always Allow Time To Heal

MechWarriors are in many ways more valuable than BattleMechs, because their experience is so hard to replace. Take care of your MechWarriors by letting them sit out a mission if they get hurt. Then rotate them back into the front lines when they're healthy again.

Salvage Strategies

Managing salvage is a big part of being a MechCommander. Battalion is notorious for providing only the minimum equipment necessary to finance a campaign, and salvage represents a great way of increasing your arsenal and your supply of Resource Points. While salvage is really no more complicated than shooting a foe and picking up the debris later, there are a few important tips to bear in mind as you acquire and manage your salvaged materials.

Maximizing Salvage

You'll have a better chance of salvaging a 'Mech if you just barely destroy it. For example, if the 'Mech has no armor left and you finish it off with a tiny Pulse Laser blast, you'll have a good chance of salvaging it. If, on the other hand, you level it with a massive Heavy Autocannon volley, it's almost certain that you'll damage it beyond repair.

'Mechs whose engines explode aren't salvageable. Sometimes you'll get unlucky even if you destroy the 'Mech with very light weapons, and you'll damage it just enough to make it explode. That's the breaks; salvage isn't an exact science.

You won't be able to salvage every 'Mech (or even most), but you can improve your odds of getting more salvage in several ways. The easiest way is to ease up on a 'Mech that's almost destroyed and only let one or two 'Mechs with reasonably light weapons finish it off. This is better than letting all your 'Mechs pound it into oblivion.

Another trick is to target the 'Mech's legs, thus disabling it in a way that's unlikely to ruin it completely. This should only be attempted when the 'Mech is so battered that it no longer poses a threat, however.

TIP *The tougher your opponents, the harder it is to employ these salvaging tricks. In a rough fight you can't worry about keeping the enemy intact—you must destroy him, and quickly! In these cases, targeting the legs or having just one of your 'Mechs fire allows the enemy to stay alive longer and do extra damage to your 'Mechs.*

Balance your desire for salvage with the necessities of the battlefield.

Capturing Structures

Keep a sharp lookout for salvage opportunities in every battle. Some missions feature Clan structures you can capture for salvage, often in out-of-the-way places. Sometimes they're placed dangerously close to explosive structures that might get detonated during battle—so remember to look before you shoot.

Some of the best weapons and items in *Desperate Measures* are available primarily from salvageable structures.

Figure 5-6. Salvageable buildings are often hidden in out-of-the-way places.

Taking on Extra Foes

Although you can sometimes get away with avoiding the toughest enemy 'Mechs, you should always consider battles from a salvage standpoint. Sure, avoiding that *Mad Cat* or *Vulture* might seem like a great idea in the short term—but you should ask yourself: Can I beat it? If so, you might want to give it a shot. A big Clan 'Mech is a valuable prize, and capturing one in salvage can make subsequent missions that much easier. *Mad Cats,* especially, are excellent catches.

Vehicles can't be salvaged, so there's never an upside to fighting vehicles you don't absolutely have to fight.

TIP *In the toughest missions, taking on extra 'Mechs might not be a great idea. Measure the potential damage to your existing 'Mechs against the odds of salvaging your enemy, then attack or avoid based on your assessment.*

Using Clan Weapons and 'Mechs

As explained in Chapter 3, Clan 'Mechs and weapons are flat-out superior to those from the Inner Sphere. Clan weapons are usually lighter and in all cases better than Inner Sphere weapons, and Clan 'Mechs can carry a lot more weapons and armor than their Inner Sphere counterparts.

Just how great is this discrepancy? To put it into perspective, a 60-ton Clan *Vulture-W* can carry seven more tons of weapons than a 70-ton Inner Sphere *Jagermech-W.* Furthermore, it carries fractionally more armor than the *Jagermech.* This isn't an uncommon scenario! A typical Clan 'Mech is equal or superior to an Inner Sphere design that's ten tons heavier. That makes a huge difference.

The same can be said for the Clan's ultra-light and super-potent weapons. When you compare them individually to Inner Sphere models the differences might seem manageable, but there is a huge difference between a 'Mech loaded with Clan weapons and one loaded with Inner Sphere designs.

The bottom line then is to save Clan 'Mechs and weapons whenever possible, and try to slowly phase out Inner Sphere designs.

Sell or Repair?

Only sell Clan 'Mechs or weapons if you have a huge surplus, and even then think twice. Remember, you can't just buy a new Clan 'Mech or weapon at Battalion!

Spares come in handy, and that's true both for 'Mechs and weapons. Hold on to that Clan technology, and use it as much as possible. If you sell it, rest assured that Battalion won't give you enough Resource Points to compensate for its loss.

TIP *The Clan's ER-PPC and Heavy LB-X Autocannon are true prizes. Never sell these weapons, regardless of how many you already possess.*

Non-Combat Strategies

Because combat is at the core of what you'll do as a MechCommander, the following "non-combat" strategies are actually related very closely to combat. They're only referred to as "non-combat" because they don't pertain to actual fighting. Instead, they relate to the things you should do before and after combat over the course of a mission.

This advice is quite general; much more detailed advice appears in the individual mission walkthroughs in Chapters 6 through 13.

Stick Together

The first rule is simple: Have your 'Mechs stick together. That's because the combined firepower of all your 'Mechs can usually dispatch enemies quickly. If you split up your 'Mechs and order them all to fight the enemy individually, they'll take a long time to gun down opponents. This gives the bad guys extra time to shoot holes in your 'Mechs, which they inevitably capitalize on.

Sometimes splitting up your 'Mechs is profitable or simply necessary. For example, perhaps you need to defend both the front and back of a convoy, or you need to defend two sides of a base simultaneously. Or perhaps you want to break a small scout 'Mech away from the main group and have it investigate the other side of the map. All these are acceptable situations in which to break up your 'Mech group. Just don't make a habit of splitting up your 'Mechs for no good reason.

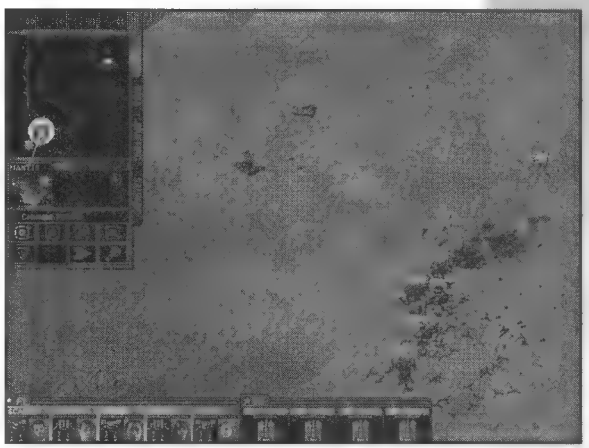


Figure 5-7. Sticking together, as these 'Mechs are, allows your 'Mechs to concentrate their fire effectively.

Watch Your Sensors

Sensors are very useful and often overlooked. By paying careful attention to sensor contacts in the black, unrevealed portion of the battlefield map you can usually get a good sense of what you're walking into. How are the contacts arranged? Are they moving or stationary? How many are there total?

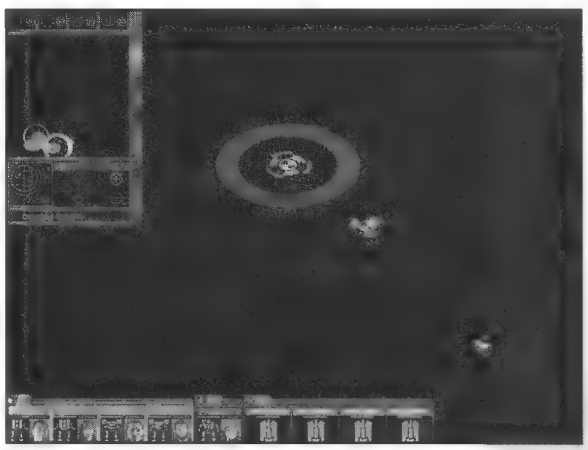


Figure 5-8. These moving sensor contacts are patrolling vehicles.

Here are some of the clever things you can do when you pay close attention to your sensors:

- Look for ways to avoid an area filled with too many sensor contacts, or figure out which of two paths is easier by comparing the number of contacts on each.
- Observe a pattern of contacts and approach in such a way that your forces will only engage one of those contacts, instead of plunging into the middle and taking fire from all sides.
- Watch contacts over a long period of time to figure out (and avoid) enemy patrol routes.

Use High Ground

While commanding a mission, it's easy to get tunnel vision and lose sight of the world around you. Here's a tip that'll serve you well: Always watch the map for high ground. Ridges, bluffs, hills, and mountains affect your 'Mechs' vision more profoundly than you might expect. Climbing to the top of a mountain, for example, gives you a view of a very large area around the mountain. This enhanced vision is useful in any number

of ways: It can improve your navigation, reveal key terrain features, give a view of distant enemies, and even pave the way for long-distance artillery strikes.

Whenever you see high ground, therefore, it's a good idea to climb it. Remember that your 'Mechs, unlike vehicles, are largely unaffected by steep terrain—so there's no downside to ascending it.

Avoid Unnecessary Combat

While some missions require you to completely eliminate enemy resistance in a given area, most of them don't. On the ones that don't, you need to avoid unnecessary combat because chances are good that you're heavily outnumbered.

Even if you're required to eliminate all opposition, you still need to pick and choose your fights. Don't wade into the midst of enemy fortifications and fight multiple enemies simultaneously. Instead, go up to the edge of the fortified area and then retreat after firing a few long-range volleys, hoping to lure some of the defenders out.

Choose a Path (or Burn One)

MechCommander missions often give you the opportunity to take different paths to a destination. The obvious path is not always the best one. Instead of striding up a paved road, you'll often get better results by sneaking around in the wilderness or circling an enemy hideout to approach from the rear.

Always bear in mind that your BattleMechs have the ability to affect the landscape. Burn down a forest that gets in the way with weapons fire, and create alternate paths for your units to cross. Break down walls that block your path. Destroy bridges that provide extra escape routes for the enemy.

Protect the Non-Combatants

Occasionally you'll find that missions require you to protect a civilian unit or a fragile combat unit. In these cases, you should keep the unit(s) that need protection close to your main force, but somewhat to the rear to avoid enemy fire.

If your mission requires you to keep a more durable unit such as a BattleMech intact, you can usually get away with using that unit in combat. Just make sure your

other 'Mechs attack the enemy first and draw their fire, then let the mission-critical 'Mech join the fray.

ELEMENTARY COMBAT STRATEGY

Here are the basics of 'Mech combat boiled down into a few simple tenets. Every battlefield offers its own subtleties, but certain constants always apply.

Fight on Advantageous Terrain

It goes without saying that you should fight on advantageous terrain. For the purpose of 'Mech battles, advantageous terrain has a few key characteristics:

- It offers room to maneuver and retreat if necessary.
- It doesn't contain enemy emplaced defenses such as Turrets.
- It doesn't contain features such as walls that protect the enemies while they fire at your units.
- It doesn't force your 'Mechs to go too close to explosive hazards.

Figure 5-9. Don't cross these bridges without checking to see what's on the other side first.

You can't always avoid unfavorable terrain, but you can do your best to make the battlefield better. Here's how:

- Be extra careful around bridges and other choke points. Send a scout across the bridge to discover enemy forces and lure them back instead of sending your units across and letting them fight on the cramped quarters of the bridge.
- Try to lure mobile defenders such as 'Mechs and vehicles away from bases with emplaced defenses such as Turrets. Destroy the mobile units well away from the emplaced defenses, then return to chisel away at the defenses.
- Destroy emplaced defenses at long range, where they can't return fire. Only when the coast is clear should your forces attack.
- Break holes in enemy walls before approaching and starting to fight. Your 'Mechs will have a path to go through when the fighting starts, instead of being forced to break a hole while they're getting shot at.
- Avoid or detonate explosive structures instead of walking your 'Mechs too close, or—better yet—lure the enemy into them.

Concentrate Firepower

This point bears repeating: The best way to eliminate the enemy is to concentrate firepower on an individual unit instead of spreading your fire out against multiple targets. By blasting as much ordnance as possible into a single enemy, you remove it from the picture quickly and efficiently.

Concentrated firepower is effective because it gets results quickly. If three 'Mechs attack your forces, and your forces return fire against all three simultaneously, it'll take a long time for your forces to destroy any single 'Mech. By concentrating on one 'Mech and ignoring the others, you can destroy it quickly. Now there's one less 'Mech firing at your forces, and your job is just that much easier.

Keep Moving

Your 'Mechs and vehicles remember your attack orders even after you've told them to move to a different spot. Thus, you can assign your units a target and then have them move to a new position; they'll keep firing at the target as they move.

Walking and running reduce the chances that your 'Mechs will get hit. It's always a good idea, therefore, to have them pace back and forth during combat. Don't let them stand still.

TIP *Walking is usually best, as your 'Mechs will maintain a weapons lock as they walk. Running interferes with aiming and shooting considerably more than walking, so you should only run when the fight has moved to a range you aren't comfortable with.*

For example, if your 'Mechs all have long-range weapons and an enemy with a Heavy Autocannon is getting too close, you should have your forces run until they've opened a large gap with the enemy, then return to a walking pace.

Conserve Ammunition

If you're employing 'Mechs with heavy projectile weapons, you're bound to have ammunition shortages. This makes it tempting to avoid projectile weapons altogether. Still, many missions feature tough enemies that are hard to dispatch without the aid of powerful projectiles. The best solution is generally to conserve ammunition. Use Ammo Conservation mode when firing on small, unthreatening targets to avoid wasting precious ammo.

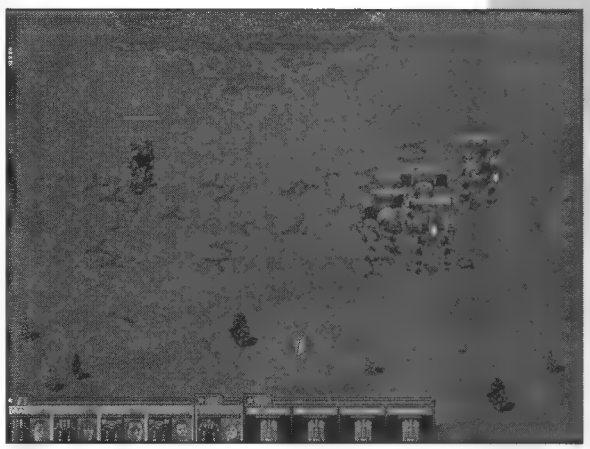


Figure 5-10. In the original MechCommander, **'Mechs that wanted to conserve their ammo would have to hang back and simply not fight (as the lone** Hunchback IIC **is doing here). Now you can use Ammo Conservation mode instead.**

To Target or Not to Target?

The final combat tenet regards targeting.

It's up to you whether to spend most of the battle targeting pieces of enemy 'Mechs, or to allow your MechWarriors to fire indiscriminately at the entire enemy 'Mech. Just bear in mind that targeting portions of an enemy is akin to gambling. Targeting a specific body part results in concentrated damage when your shots hit, but a lot more shots will miss when you target specific locations. You're gambling that enough shots will hit to make the targeting worthwhile.

The head is the hardest part of the enemy to hit. Arms and legs are also tough, and sections of torso—while not nearly as elusive as the head—still aren't easy shots.

If you do decide to target specific body parts, bear in mind that it works best if your 'Mechs have lots of fast-firing weapons like Large X-Pulse Lasers (so you'll get lots of chances to hit) and the target is at close range (where your chances of hitting are improved). Also, big, slow 'Mechs are more vulnerable to targeted fire than small, nimble 'Mechs—so don't waste your time trying to shoot the head off a running *Commando*. Just destroy it conventionally.

When in doubt, *don't* target specific portions of the enemy. Stick to the basics, and only target body parts when you know the battle is well in hand.

COMBAT TIPS AND TRICKS

Beyond the basics of combat, there are a number of tips and tricks that will help you get the most out of every battle. Most are very situational, so you can't use them all the time—but you should definitely use them whenever possible.

Attack from Afar

If your 'Mechs have long-range attack capabilities, you should use them to take out immobile targets from afar. Turrets are the best targets, but vehicles and 'Mechs hiding behind barriers are often equally vulnerable to long-range gunnery. Don't feel obligated to close to medium range: force your 'Mechs to retreat if they get too close.

Protect the Weak

You can change the leader or point man in each Force Group as often as you like during a mission. Because the point man tends to encounter the enemy first and take the most fire, you should always assign a new point man when the current leader's 'Mech is severely damaged.

If a 'Mech is so thoroughly damaged that a mere scratch could destroy it, switching it to a backup position may not be enough. You might have to assign it to its own group and let it lag well behind the others, catching up only after combat is well under way and the enemy has started attacking other 'Mechs instead.

Bait and Switch

This technique is absolutely crucial in tough missions.

Enemy 'Mechs tend to target a single one of your 'Mechs and pound away at it—that's just common sense. If enough enemies have targeted the same 'Mech, it'll start to deteriorate fast. Watch for this occurrence and have the 'Mech that's getting pelted run away while your other 'Mechs engage the enemy at closer range. Running makes the persecuted 'Mech harder to hit, and eventually takes him out of danger.

TIP *You can pause the game to make it easier to issue these orders in the heat of battle.*

In the very hardest missions, it's absolutely *essential* that you monitor your 'Mechs' status during battles and move the most severely damaged 'Mechs out of enemy range. This prevents any number of needless 'Mech losses and MechWarrior deaths.

TIP *After the damaged 'Mech has moved out of enemy range and the enemy has turned its attention to your other 'Mechs, you can move the damaged 'Mech back into range and have it attack the enemy from afar.*

Use Artillery and Environmental Effects

Some missions give you multiple artillery strikes. Usually you don't need these strikes for any specific purpose—they're just there to make your job easier. Take advantage of these strikes! It's easy to forget about them, but they're a great tool for destroying emplaced defenses and stationary vehicles. They also can be used against moving enemies, but you'll have to use a little guesswork to figure out where they'll be when the artillery finally hits.

Similarly, always watch for explosive vehicles or structures that you can detonate near enemy units.

Figure 5-11. This Fuel Truck can be detonated from afar, damaging everything around it.

Pause the Game

Never forget that you can pause the game in single-player missions, and issue orders while the game is paused! Pausing the game allows you to control the battle much more finely than you could without pausing. It's especially useful for evaluating the position of your 'Mechs in relation to the enemy and assigning them destinations to move to.

Pausing the game allows you to easily move damaged 'Mechs toward the rear, and bring undamaged 'Mechs up to the front lines. It also lets you assess the battlefield objectively.

TIP *You can't pause the action in multiplayer games.*

BASE ATTACK STRATEGIES

Over and over again you'll find yourself in the position of having to assault a fortified enemy base. This happens so frequently that we thought we'd devote a small final section to it.

Pick Away or Charge In?

Although it may be tempting to gather all your 'Mechs together and then storm the enemy base in a lightning-fast strike, in practice you'll have an easier time if you attack slowly and methodically. Occasionally you'll find a mission in which attacking quickly has real merits—for example, the base is filled with powered-down units and by attacking fast you can destroy them before they power up—but, generally speaking, you should enter bases with deliberate patience.

First, keep your 'Mechs well back and methodically destroy Turrets or Turret Control Towers with your longest-range weapons or artillery strikes. Even the longest-ranged Turrets can be shot at and destroyed from outside their effective range.

In the process of destroying enemy Turrets, you might warn mobile defenders of your presence. If enemy units start to flood out of the base, have your units retreat a bit and fight them well away from the base itself. Only approach the base again when all those attacking units have been destroyed. (If you stray too close to the base while you fight these units, you'll be in the maddening position of taking fire both from the base's mobile defenders and its emplaced defenses—plus any units still hiding inside the base itself.)

Now, finish destroying the Turrets from afar. Also blast a hole in the base from afar, then rush inside.

TIP *Picking off Turrets from long range is particularly essential in* Desperate Measures, *because the new Artillery Turret is devastating. Wading into a cluster of Artillery Turrets is a surefire way to lose the missions.*

Attack the Wall or the Gate?

Most bases feature a main gate. Gates open automatically for the side that controls them, but lock out the enemy. Although gates are generally more fragile than the walls they're set into, you should generally try to shoot a hole in the base wall rather than storming the gate. Base defenses tend to be built around the gates, and you can avoid some of those defenses by creating an unexpected entrance.

Figure 5-12. Blasting a hole in the wall is usually preferable to storming the gate.

Destroy Turrets or Capture Them?

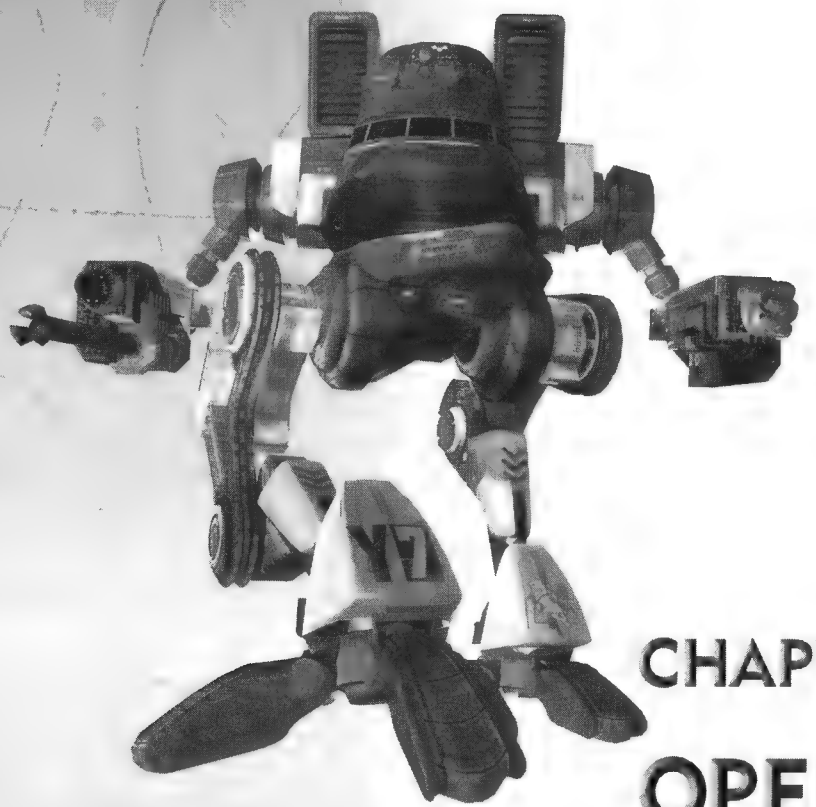
If there's a possibility that you'll need to defend an enemy base after capturing it, take care to capture enemy Turret Control Towers instead of destroying them. Although this might result in a little extra punishment for your 'Mechs, it's usually worth it to possess those Turrets when the enemy counterattacks.

Note that you can't capture enemy structures while there are active enemies nearby. In this case, you might want to draw out the enemies as described under "Pick Away or Charge In?" before trying to capture the Turret Control Tower.

TIP Desperate Measures *features many opportunities for jump-capable 'Mechs. Look for places where a jump-capable 'Mech can leap over a wall and capture a Turret Control Tower.*

Once the Turrets have been captured, try to defend the Turret Control Tower and keep your forces nearby, where the Turrets can lend fire support.

PART 2
THE OPERATIONS



CHAPTER 6

OPERATION 1: BEACHHEAD

The goal of your first Operation is to establish a beachhead on Port Arthur. The campaign has begun on a grim note; Battalion has lost contact with X-ray Company, the first company to be dropped on the planet. Their status is unknown. As MechCommander of Zulu Company, you'll have to keep a sharp lookout for remnants of X-ray Company and pick up the slack caused by their absence.

As you read these mission walkthroughs, bear in mind that they represent only one way of attacking a mission. There are always alternatives, so feel free to experiment and find your own path to victory.

TIP *Throughout the campaign you'll encounter a number of enemy structures. Many of these can be captured for salvage parts. These structures usually have no direct bearing on your mission goals, but capturing them can be quite profitable.*

Instead of repeatedly mentioning these structures and telling you to capture them, the following mission walkthroughs assume that you'll keep your eyes open and capture these structures whenever convenient.

Always remember: There are salvage opportunities in most missions, and it's up to you to exploit them.

MISSION 1-1: LIBERATE WORK CAMPS

The Smoke Jaguars have been placing dissidents into so-called "Reeducation" Camps. Your task is to liberate two such work camps, designated Alpha and Beta, by destroying each camp's headquarters (HQ), any Clan units at Camp Beta, and a Natural Gas Tower at Camp Alpha.

Also, the local garrison must be dealt with. This garrison is hosted by three main buildings; destroy the buildings and Clan control in this area will be broken.

You might face Laser Turrets, and a Clan *Uller* OmniMech has been reported in the area.

- Destroy Alpha Camp HQ and Natural Gas Tower
- Destroy the three Garrison Buildings at Garrison Base
- Destroy Beta Camp HQ and guard

Overview

This is a simple mission that will ease you into the flow of the campaign. Enemy resistance is limited to two small 'Mechs, a few Armored Cars, and several Laser Turrets. Enemies tend to be scattered while your forces are concentrated. This makes it easy to crush the opposition while sustaining minimal damage in return.

The map is littered with structures of various sorts, only a few of which are truly important. Specifically, you'll need to destroy two Camp HQ buildings, a Natural Gas Tower, and three Garrison Buildings.

Recommended Forces

Your Drop Weight Limit is 85 tons. If you assign all three of your starting 'Mechs (two *Commandos* and a *Firestarter*) to the mission, you'll have a respectable 80 tons. You might want to remove a few SRMs from these 'Mechs and replace them

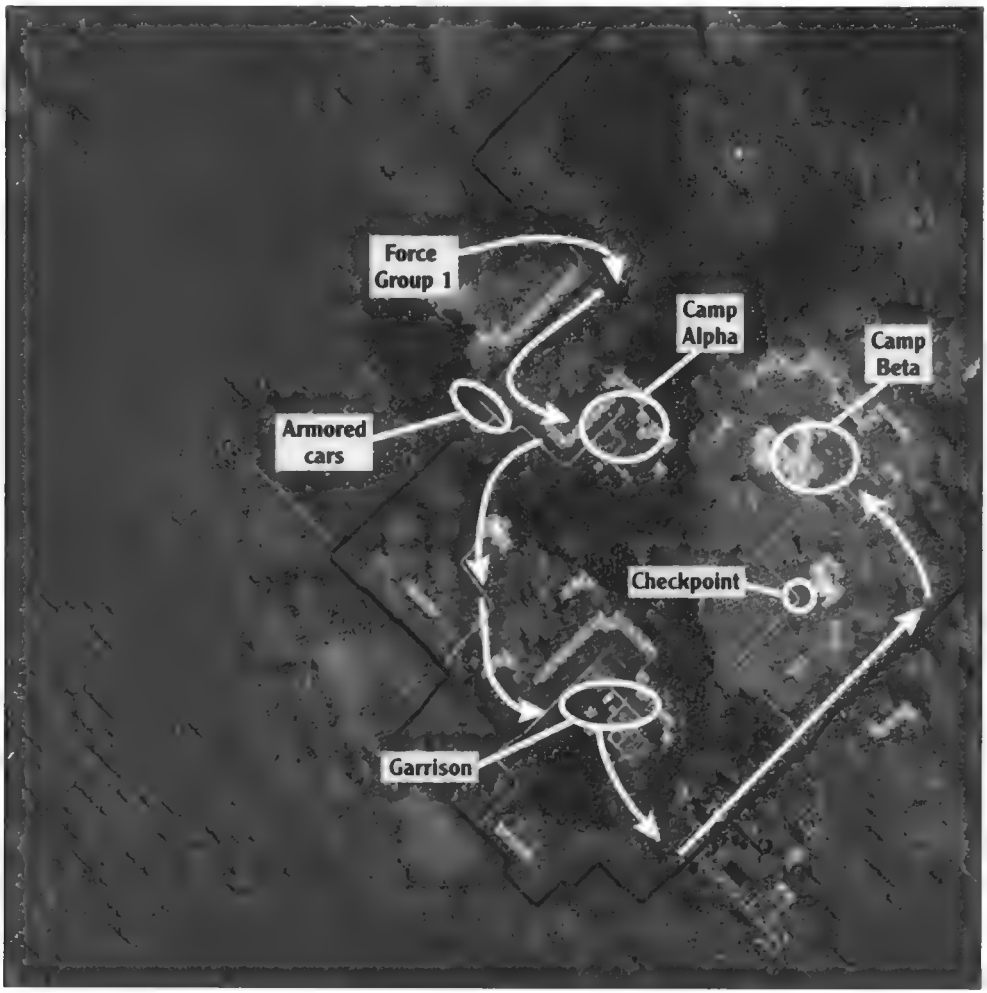
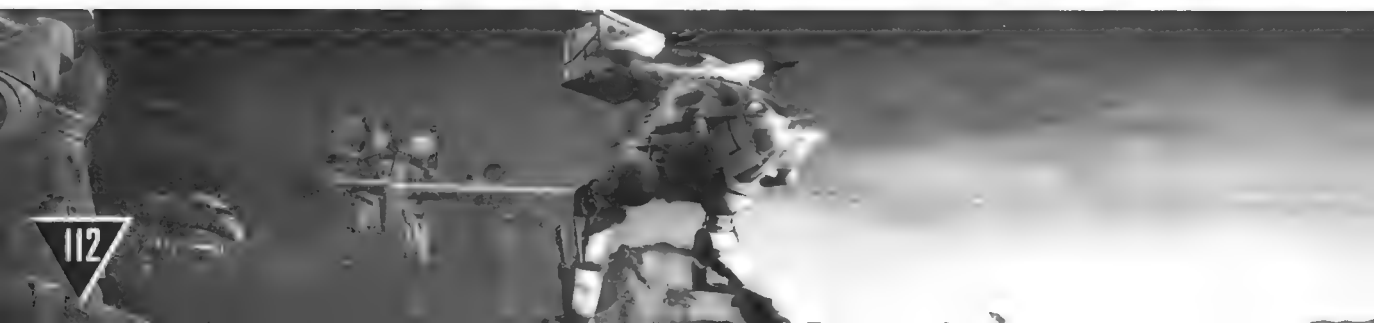


Fig. 6-1. Battle Map of Mission 1-1.



with harder-hitting weapons such as a Heavy Flamer or Lasers, but this is entirely up to you. The mission can be won with a minimum of 'Mech customization.

If you want to lowball the mission and win with only two 'Mechs, be sure to stock up on those harder-hitting weapons. If you don't, you'll probably have trouble with the *Uller* you encounter at the end.

Strategy Blueprint

Your forces are all deployed at Drop Point 1. The only opposition in the immediate area is a trio of Armored Cars. Start walking your 'Mechs along the path outlined on the Battle Map, heading for Camp Alpha. Destroy the Armored Cars you encounter along the way with concentrated fire.

Soon you'll reach Camp Alpha, which is labeled on the Battle Map and seen in Figure 6-2. It's defended by a single Laser Turret. Destroy the Turret with concentrated fire, then destroy the structures labeled Camp HQ and Natural Gas Tower. Be sure to stand clear of the Tower as you destroy it.

Fig. 6-2. This is Camp Alpha. The parked Fuel Truck will drive away as you approach, so be careful!

TIP *As you approach Camp Alpha, a Fuel Truck will depart. Watch out! The Truck is highly explosive, and shooting it when it's too close to your 'Mechs is one of the easiest ways to take a beating in this mission. Attacking the Fuel Truck is completely unnecessary.*

After leveling Camp Alpha, start moving your 'Mechs toward the spot labeled Garrison on the Battle Map. The Garrison has slightly better defenses than Camp Alpha, because—in addition to an Armored Car and its single Laser Turret—a *Commando-A* is patrolling the area. Since you possess three 'Mechs of equal or greater tonnage than the *Commando,* you should have little difficulty killing it with concentrated fire.

Destroy the Laser Turret before fighting the *Commando,* so that both the *Commando* and Turret aren't hitting your 'Mechs at the same time.

When all resistance has been eliminated, destroy the three nearby structures labeled Garrison Building.

Now proceed to Camp Beta, taking the highlighted path on your Battle Map. By following the path illustrated on the Battle Map you can avoid a small checkpoint defended by an Armored Car and a Laser Turret.

At Camp Beta you'll find an *Uller* standing guard. Immediately attack the *Uller* and destroy it with concentrated fire. Remember to keep your 'Mechs moving as they fight! When the *Uller* is obliterated, destroy the building labeled Camp HQ. The mission ends when this structure is demolished.

Mission 1-2: Rescue Captured Pilots

Two MechWarriors and some supplies have been captured by Clan Bondsmen. The supplies are being held in a field camp; the MechWarriors are being held captive in a barn somewhere in the vicinity. Your task is to locate and liberate both the supplies and the MechWarriors.

The location of the prison barn is unknown, but if you capture an HQ vehicle located near the field camp, it will reveal the location of the barn.

Once you've liberated both MechWarriors and supplies you must proceed to the Extraction Point.

Artillery strikes are available in this mission. The recommended use for these strikes is to detonate a bridge after your 'Mechs have crossed, thus preventing enemy reinforcements from following.

- Capture supplies from Bondsman field camp
- Rescue captured pilots from Bondsman prison barn (using APC)
- Escort APC to Extraction Point for pickup
- Capture HQ vehicle (secondary)

Overview

This mission, unlike the last, features more enemies than you can safely defeat. Thus, you'll do much better if you pick and choose your fights instead of attacking everything in sight.

Most missions from here on out will feature similarly tough odds. Theoretically, a supremely lucky and talented MechCommander could defeat every enemy in the combat area, but it's best to plan carefully and only fight battles that are absolutely necessary.

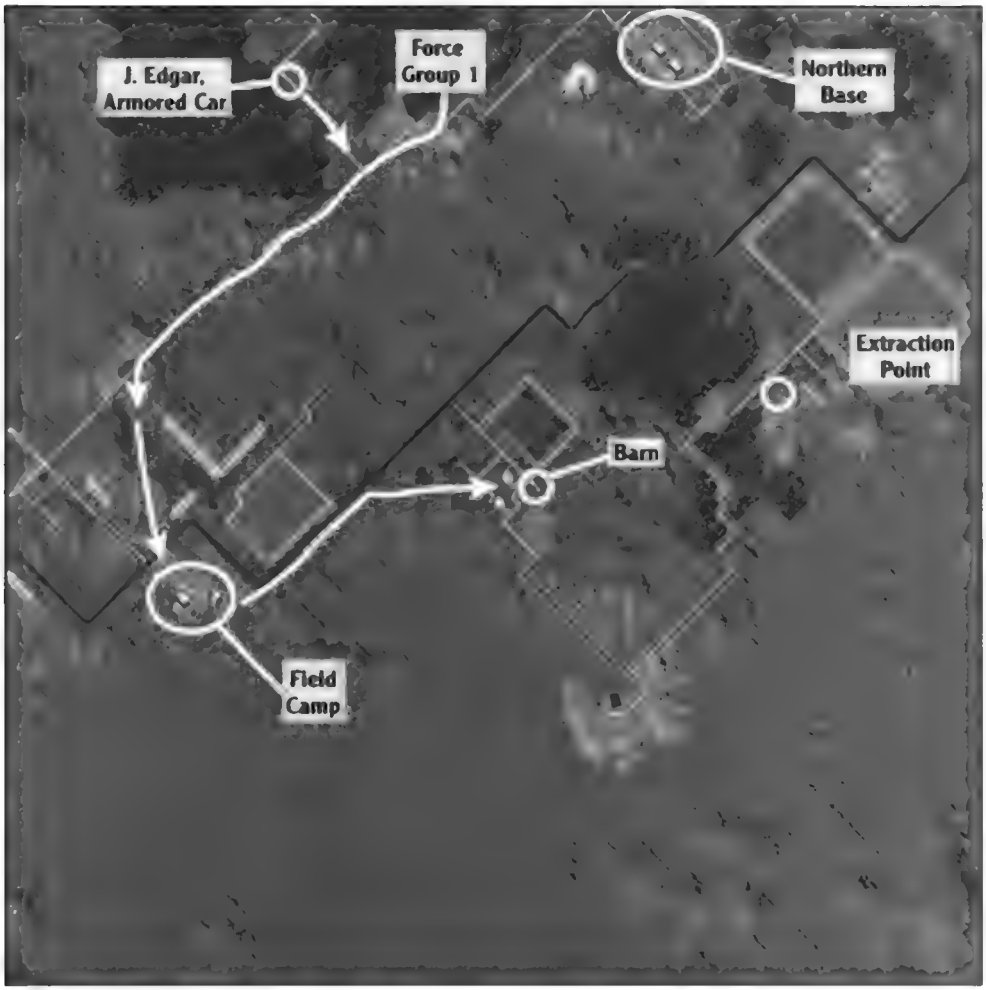


Fig. 6-3. Battle Map of Mission 1-2.

Despite the enemy's superior numbers, this isn't a terribly difficult mission. Most of the enemy forces are sequestered in a fortified base to the north, and will only emerge gradually. If you proceed south in a fairly efficient manner and destroy the bridge behind you, you don't need to worry about getting overwhelmed by these northern forces.

Recommended Forces

Your Drop Weight Limit is 80 tons. If you salvaged the *Uller* from Mission 1 you can deploy it here along with a pair of *Commandos* for a total of 80 tons. More likely, though, you'll be stuck with the same three 'Mechs you started with.

You'll also get an APC for this mission, which is automatically added to your forces. Thankfully, it doesn't count against your 80-ton drop limit.

Again, weapon configuration is left to your discretion. This isn't a combat-intensive mission if you do it right.

You're allocated two Large Artillery Strikes, useful for destroying bridge segments.

Strategy Blueprint

Your forces are dropped into a clearing in the forest. Immediately blast away the trees to the southeast and escape the clearing as quickly as possible.

Your forces are now on a roadway that's patrolled by several vehicles, chiefly Armored Cars and *J. Edgars*. Proceed southwest along the road, following the path highlighted on the Battle Map. Dispatch any vehicles that get in your way.

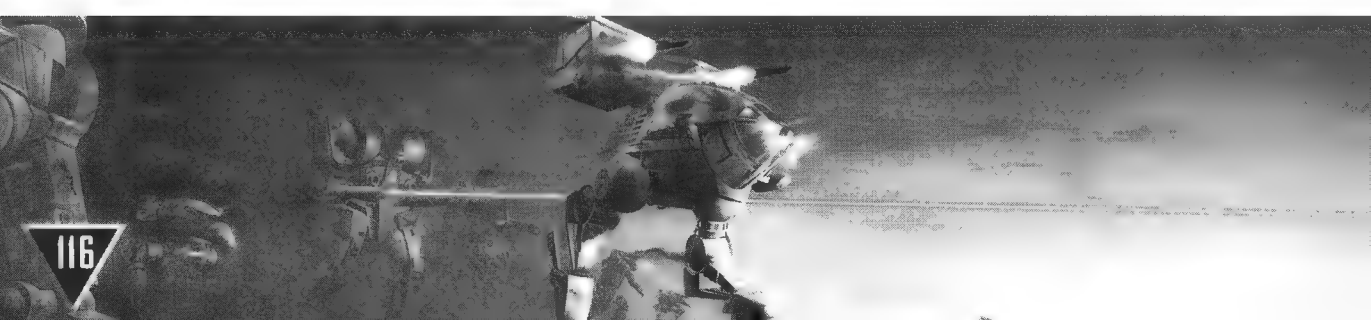
TIP *Be sure to keep your APC away from combat. If it's destroyed, your mission is an automatic failure. A good policy is to keep it close to your 'Mechs, with the 'Mechs between the APC and any enemies.*

Move quickly, because a few Armored Cars and a *J. Edgar* will periodically emerge from a northern base.

Eventually you'll reach a bridge. Destroy any vehicles in the vicinity and have all your forces cross to the south side of the bridge. Then, select a Large Artillery Strike and target the bridge with it. Blowing up the bridge prevents forces from the northern base from easily pursuing you.

TIP *Once the bridge is destroyed, patrolling forces from the northern base will have a hard time getting at you. You don't have to worry about them now—unless you're extremely slow, or you try to attack the base, which isn't recommended.*

Proceed along the path indicated on the Battle Map. Eventually you'll reach the field camp where the enemy HQ vehicle is parked, along with a *J. Edgar* and *Striker* for defense. Have your 'Mechs target the *J. Edgar* or *Striker,* meanwhile sprinting after



the HQ vehicle as it tries to drive away. The vehicle is slow, so your 'Mechs should be able to easily catch and capture it. (Remember, though, if the enemy is too close you will not be able to capture it.) Once it's captured, the location of the prison barn will become visible on your map. Now dispatch the *J. Edgar* and *Striker.*

Also capture the nearby Container Stack. Once you've done that, you'll have completed your primary objective.

Now go northeast toward the prison barn. A *Commando-A* and *Commando-W* guard this barn. Destroy them with concentrated fire, first targeting the *Commando-W* until it's disabled or destroyed and then targeting the *Commando-A.* Keep your APC well to the rear to prevent it from getting damaged in the firefight.

Note that a stray Armored Car or *J. Edgar* may enter the area from the north. If so, you'll have to take them out as well.

When the *Commandos* are destroyed, you can capture the prison barn with the APC, thus completing your second objective.

Around this time, the *Hollander II* parked in the northern base will power up and start approaching. If you move quickly, however, you needn't fight it.

Now send all units toward the Extraction Point marked on your Battle Map. Get them inside the Extraction Point marker, and the mission ends successfully.

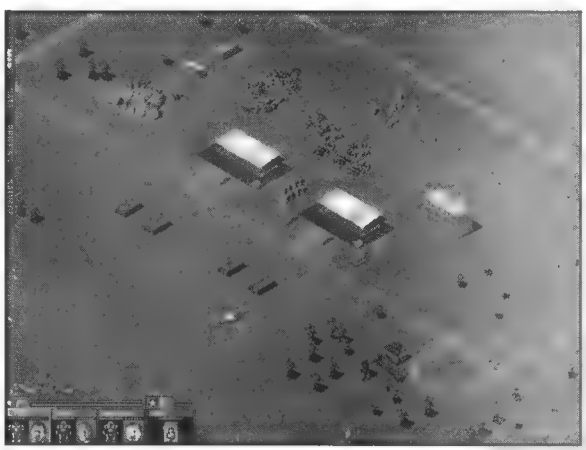


Fig. 6-4. Destroying this base is completely unnecessary.

TIP *Before ending the mission, you may attack the fortified base in the northern part of the map. It's defended by a* Hollander II, *as well as any Armored Cars or* J. Edgars *that failed to attack you earlier. The base is shown in Figure 6-4.*

Only the very bold or reckless should attempt this maneuver, as it's a very difficult fight to win.

The main payoff for winning this battle is a Container Stack containing two Clan Streak SRM Packs, and the chance to salvage the Hollander II. *But again, this battle is practically suicide.*

Another ploy is to send a lone 'Mech into the base to capture the Container Stack, then run away. This is also risky, as the Hollander II *has great range and accuracy with its Gauss Rifle. Wise MechCommanders will simply steer clear of the base altogether.*

MISSION 1-3: RECOVER RAVEN 'MECH

A *Raven* scout 'Mech that was lost during the initial combat drop has been located. The pilot was forced to land her *Raven* near an enemy cargo transfer post, and has powered down her 'Mech to avoid detection. Your task is to locate the *Raven* and escort it to safety. You'll have full command control over the *Raven* after locating it.

The enemy is well entrenched on this island. Discretion and careful avoidance of unnecessary combat are key to finishing the mission intact.

- Link up with *Raven*
- Escort *Raven* to the Extraction Point

Overview

This is a difficult mission. It takes place on a map that's virtually crawling with enemy vehicles and 'Mechs. The suggested path outlined on the Battle Map doesn't keep you safe from everything, but allows you to avoid a number of vehicles patrolling the central and northern parts of the island.

Patience is necessary on this mission. Instead of charging from one spot to another, you'll do well to move your 'Mechs from one spot to the next, carefully destroying any fortifications you can from long range before moving ahead.

You have access to several air strikes during this mission. It's recommended that you use them to destroy immobile vehicles and Turrets.

The toughest fight of the mission comes at the very end, so be prepared.

Recommended Forces

Your Drop Weight Limit is 115 tons. We recommend that you take the full amount (or something very close to it). If you're lucky enough to have enough Resource Points you can buy a brand new *Centurion* from Battalion. Its weight and punch will be worthwhile for this mission. More likely, you can't buy the *Centurion* without selling too much valuable equipment. In this case, at least try to muster four small 'Mechs. (Hopefully, you managed to salvage a *Commando* somewhere in Missions 1 or 2).

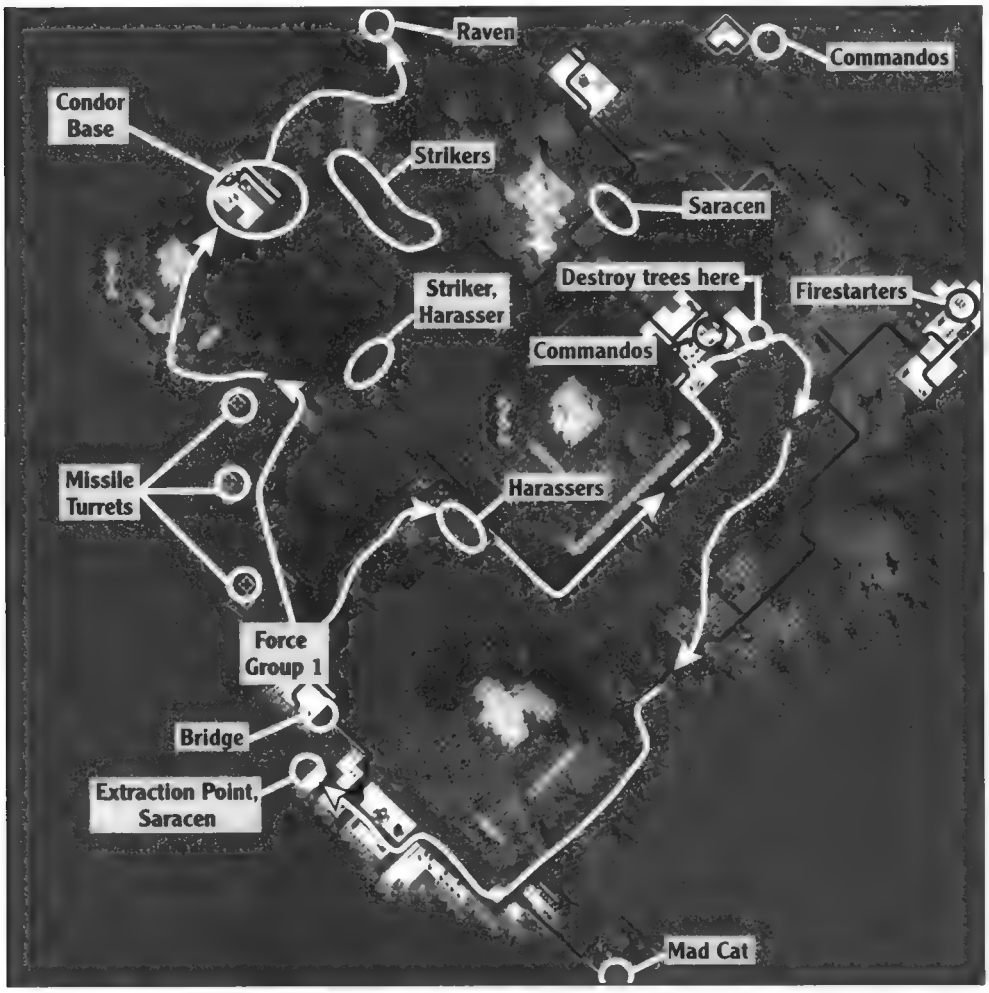


Fig. 6-5. Battle Map of Mission 1-3.

Equip all but one of your 'Mechs with the usual array of heavy-hitting weapons (perhaps including an Autocannon or two). One light 'Mech, however, should possess nothing but long-range weapons. A payload of either four LRM Racks or two Light Autocannons will suffice for this 'Mech—the Autocannons, with their extra ammo, are probably best.

You'll have two Small and three Large Artillery Strikes for this mission.

Strategy Blueprint

Your forces are all dropped to the spot marked Force Group 1 on the Battle Map. Capture the nearby building.

Immediately after the drop, an enemy air strike will destroy the bridge leading south to the Extraction Point. A *Saracen* will then appear near the Extraction Point. Move your 'Mechs slightly north so the *Saracen* can't shoot them.

There are two paths drawn on your Battle Map that lead away from the drop point. For now, you want to blaze a path that hugs the coastline, proceeding northwest. Before you start following this path in earnest, however, you must destroy the first of three Missile Turrets mounted on tiny islands off the coast.

TIP

It's vital that you destroy the three Missile Turrets located along the coast without taking much return damage. But how?

Keep all of your 'Mechs out of the first Missile Turret's range and drop a small artillery strike on it. This will almost destroy it. Then finish off the Turret by attacking it with your lone 'Mech bearing long-range weapons. Be sure to use the Attack from Current Position command so the 'Mech doesn't walk into the Turret's fire radius.

Repeat this process for the second Missile Turret. You'll be clear of small artillery strikes when you reach the third Missile Turret, though, so you'll need to destroy it entirely with your 'Mech's long-range weapons. Be patient.

Note that the second Missile Turret is initially out of your view, so you'll have to move your 'Mechs into its fire radius to reveal it. Have your 'Mechs retreat, running, as soon as the Turret is revealed. *This not only gets them out of the Turret's range quickly, preventing a second shot, but their movement makes them harder to hit with that first missile.*

Or you can destroy the Turret Control Building located on the first island. This is certainly the more efficient way, but it does leave your units more exposed to missile fire.

After following the coast and destroying all three Missile Turrets, you'll approach a spot labeled *Condor* Base. There, you'll find several buildings and a trio of parked *Condor* vehicles. Destroy all three *Condors* with a well-placed Large Artillery Strike, being careful not to destroy the capture-able building they're parked next to.

Now proceed north toward the spot marked *Raven* on your Battle Map.

TIP *Before moving north, look for patrolling enemy vehicles. Stay well back from moving sensor contacts and watch the vehicles' patrol routes. Wait until they're headed away before proceeding, then run. This way, you can avoid the* Strikers *and* Harassers *patrolling the interior of the island.*

Eventually you'll reach the powered-down *Raven.* Send at least one 'Mech up to touch the *Raven* and you'll assume control of it. Now have all your 'Mechs (including the *Raven*) backtrack all the way to the spot marked Force Group 1 (the place where your 'Mechs were dropped to start the mission). Follow the same path you originally took, and again try to avoid patrolling vehicles.

Back at your drop point, take the other path that's outlined on your Battle Map (the one leading north, toward the center of the island). Dispatch a pair of *Harassers* along the way—you can do this easily by detonating a network of fuel tanks near their patrol area.

Proceed north as indicated on the Battle Map. Eventually you'll reach a small base guarded by a pair of *Commando-Ws.* Destroy the *Commandos* with concentrated fire. You may have to destroy a *Saracen* that rolls in from the center of the island, as well.

Attack the forest to the northeast (see the map) to cut a path through it. Proceed through the new gap and head due south along the illustrated path, sticking near the coast to avoid a pair of *Firestarters* stationed to the east.

As you proceed south, you'll encounter a small base guarded by three Cannon Turrets. Destroy the western two Turrets with long-range fire and continue after capturing a nearby structure.

Your greatest challenge now awaits you. A *Mad Cat* is stationed to the southeast, and it will try to prevent you from reaching the Extraction Point. The *Mad Cat* is incredibly potent. Your choices are to fight it or to run past it. We recommend running.

If you choose to run past the *Mad Cat,* simply follow the path all the way to the Extraction Point. Don't stop until you reach it. You'll win when all your 'Mechs get within a few meters of the extraction marker.

TIP *The mission only ends when all your 'Mechs reach the Extraction Point. Therefore, if three of your four 'Mechs reach the Extraction Point but one of them gets knocked down or crippled by the* Mad Cat, *the mission won't end until that last 'Mech either makes it to the Extraction Point or is destroyed.*

If you choose to fight the *Mad Cat* (which is very risky), try to drop a heavy artillery strike on the fuel barrels near the spot where the *Mad Cat* attacks you. You can increase the chances of keeping the *Mad Cat* inside the artillery strike zone by

attacking it while it's in that area, thus slowing it down. If you manage to catch the *Mad Cat* in the explosion, your odds of winning are much better.

Regardless of whether your artillery does the job, have all your 'Mechs unload everything on the *Mad Cat* and keep moving to avoid excessive damage. Have the *Raven* fight, but keep it behind the others until it's clear the *Mad Cat* is focusing on a different 'Mech. It's entirely possible that your entire force group will be destroyed, but the battle is winnable—especially if you kept your forces in good shape through the mission's early stages. Try again if you fail, and this time try to keep your 'Mechs in pristine condition for the final *Mad Cat* battle (or else avoid the *Mad Cat* completely).

Note that fighting the *Mad Cat* is really only worthwhile if you get lucky and manage to salvage it. Otherwise, fighting it just gets your 'Mechs beat up.

TIP *Heavy weapons are useful for defeating the* Mad Cat. *Large Lasers, Autocannons, and PPCs are recommended.*

If your 'Mechs have Autocannons or other ammunition-powered weapons, try your hardest to keep them from running out of ammo before the Mad Cat *battle. You'll need all the power you can get!*

Mission 1-4: Destroy Clan Administration Building

A small stronghold containing a Clan Administration Building has been discovered near Clairesfield, a rural farming community. A temporary Support Building has been erected nearby. Your task is to locate and destroy the Admin Building, and ideally defend the Support Building as well.

The Clan stronghold is protected by strong perimeter defenses. Destroying the base's lone Generator or capturing the Turret Control Towers are two viable methods of eliminating the threat of Turrets.

The temporary Support Building where you start your mission is vulnerable to enemy patrols. It's recommended that you leave a small portion of your forces behind to defend this base (or eliminate all enemies who would destroy it before moving on).

- Locate and destroy Clan Admin Building
- Withdraw to Extraction Point for recovery
- Defend Support Building (secondary)

Overview

This scenario features an enemy base (shown in Figure 6-7) that can be approached from two directions. Tactically, both directions are practically identical, so neither offers a great advantage over the other. Both directions are defended by identical forces (SRM Carriers, a *J. Edgar,* and an *Uller*), both require a bridge crossing, and both require you to deal with a concrete wall protected by Laser Turrets.

This mission walkthrough goes somewhat counter to your orders—and probably counter to what you'd expect. Instead of splitting up your forces, it instructs you to keep them all together. And instead of making a direct run on the enemy base, it instructs you to scour the area and kill the enemies guarding *both* approaches first.

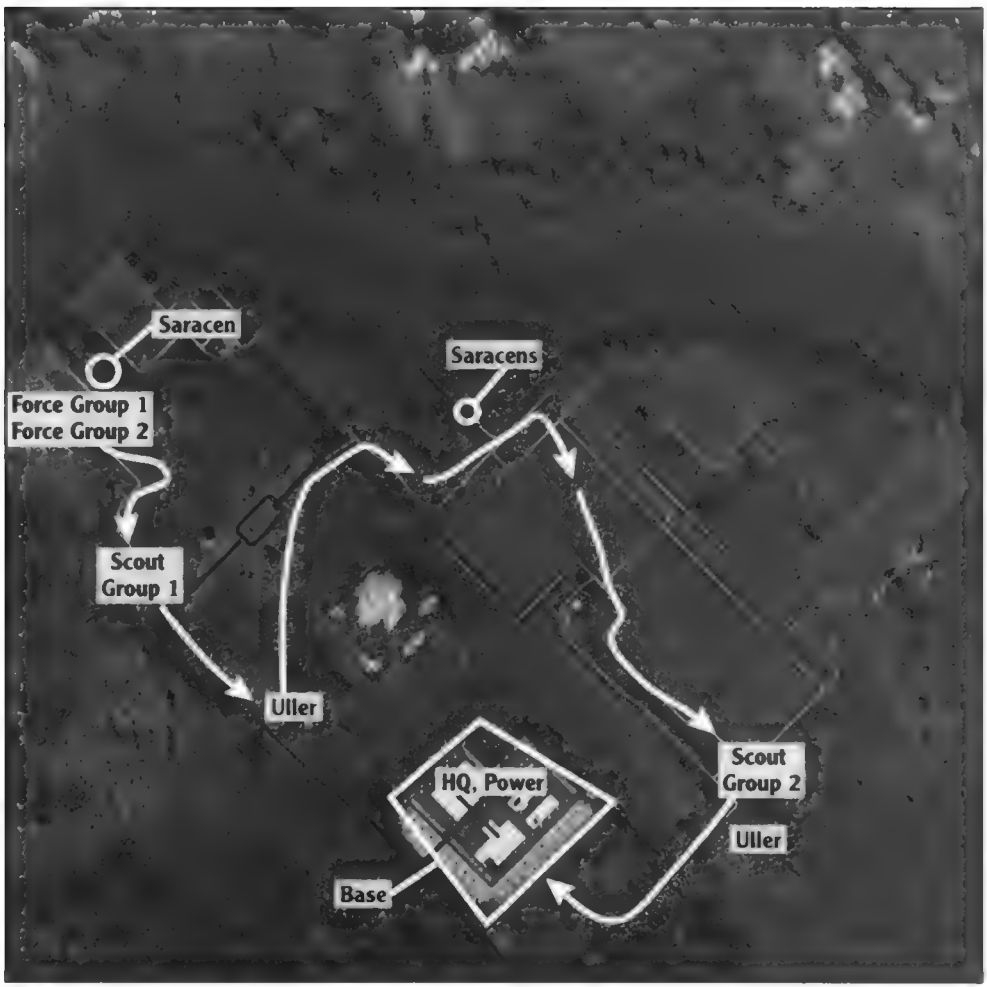


Fig. 6-6. Battle Map of Mission 1-4.

Fig. 6-7. Here's the enemy base.

There is a logical reason for both tactics. By keeping your 'Mechs together, you keep your Force Group strong, and by destroying the enemy forces guarding both entrances to the base, you get to deal with them individually instead of letting them attack you when you're busy with the Base defenders. (If left untouched, Clan forces in outlying areas are smart enough to return to their base, and then let you have it with all their firepower at once.)

This isn't a difficult mission if you use most of your drop weight, keep your forces together, and above all avoid situations where multiple groups of enemies are attacking you at once.

Recommended Forces

Your Drop Weight Limit is 200 tons. You can win with 170 tons and not have too much difficulty. Attempting the mission with a weight under 170 is possible but risky.

You might not have much choice about which 'Mechs to bring on this mission, as Resource Points and 'Mechs are still scarce at this stage of the campaign. But if you haven't purchased a medium-sized 'Mech by now, do so—buy a *Centurion.* Medium-sized 'Mechs like the *Centurion* will prove valuable during confrontations with enemy *Ullers,* and while you're assaulting the Elemental Base. Lighter 'Mechs are valuable for chasing down enemy vehicles that seek to escape and alert the base to your presence.

Similarly, both light and heavy weapons will prove useful. The heavy weapons are great for downing 'Mechs and blasting holes in the concrete walls of the base, while small, fast-firing Lasers and SRMs are good for quickly dispatching pesky Armored Cars. Also, a few LRMs are nice for attacking the LRM Carriers secreted behind the fortified base's walls.

You'll have three small artillery strikes for this mission.

Strategy Blueprint

Your forces are deployed near the Support Building. Group them all together and check your map. A roving *Saracen* will soon become visible as a sensor contact; wait near the base until it gets into attack range, then destroy it.

Now proceed along the path drawn on your Battle Map. At the spot marked Scout Group 1 you'll find a *J. Edgar* and pair of SRM Carriers parked on the road. The SRM Carriers will approach and try to distract you while the *J. Edgar* tries to flee. Go after that *J. Edgar* and destroy it quickly! It's a scout, and the enemy base will be better prepared for your arrival if you fail to destroy it.

TIP *Though your job is slightly easier if you kill the* J. Edgar, *don't worry if it escapes. If you do the mission in the way we suggest, you can win with relative ease regardless of whether the base is alerted.*

After killing the *J. Edgar* and finishing off the two SRMs, keep moving toward the enemy base. An *Uller-A* is your next opponent; engage it and try to destroy it quickly.

Do *not* cross the bridge that leads to the enemy base—in fact, stay away from it. Instead, after killing the *Uller,* continue to follow the path marked on your Battle Map. It leads you north, to where a pair of *Saracens* are on patrol. Blow them up as soon as they enter visual range.

TIP *You could've avoided these* Saracens, *but if you don't destroy them now they'll head toward your Field Office and destroy it later, while you're busy attacking the base.*

Now keep following the path until you encounter Scout Group 2: two SRM Carriers and a *J. Edgar.* Destroy these vehicles and fight the *Uller-A* stationed nearby. (The *Uller* won't be around if you allowed a *J. Edgar* to escape earlier.)

When all enemies are dispatched, cross the bridge to the south. Pause for a moment. This is where you need to make a decision.

If you managed to destroy both Scout Groups' *J. Edgars* before they managed to escape *and* you already destroyed both *Ullers,* the Clan base is currently unprepared. Thus, you can attack the base with a certain element of surprise. To do this, pick off a couple of the closest Laser Turrets, run up to the wall, blast a hole in the wall, and destroy the three Vehicle Barracks located inside the base. Then clean up any *Strikers* and miscellaneous vehicles shooting at you from inside. (Destroying the Vehicle Barracks quickly is key, because it prevents many of the parked vehicles inside the base from powering up and attacking.)

TIP *There's a lot of explosive material inside the base. Be careful or you'll accidentally take out structures you can later capture for salvage.*

If you didn't manage to destroy both *J. Edgar* and both *Ullers,* the base is now prepared for your arrival. (In other words, all vehicles are now manned, so destroying the Vehicle Barracks is pointless.) If this is the case, station your 'Mechs well back from the base walls and wait. Pick off a couple of Laser Turrets from long range if you're bored. Eventually a stream of Armored Cars and a *Bulldog* will approach. Destroy them, trying your best to keep your 'Mechs far away from the *Bulldog.*

When it seems like no more vehicles are coming your way, blast a hole in the base wall and march inside quickly. Take over both Turret Control Towers and destroy any *Strikers* inside. If you previously failed to kill one of the two *Ullers,* it'll come after you when you attack the base. Capturing the Turret Control Towers, however, will make the fight against the *Uller* easier—the Turrets will actually turn on the *Uller* and help destroy it!

When all resistance inside the base is destroyed, take the two capture-able structures and destroy the large Administration Building. Then march all your 'Mechs back to the Extraction Point, located right near the spot where the 'Mechs were initially dropped.

MISSION 1-5: DEFEND FARMS FROM ATTACK

A number of small Smoke Jaguar strike forces are attacking a resistance cell in the Vanderhome region of Port Arthur. The resistance is based in two Farms. Your task is to defend both Farms from Jaguar attack.

Each Farm consists of several buildings in a tight cluster. Practically speaking, "defending" a Farm simply means preventing the Jaguars from leveling every structure in the cluster. Thus, if you manage to preserve at least one structure from each Farm, you'll succeed in your mission.

The local terrain is heavily forested. A Minelayer is recommended for this mission, because its mines will help seal off possible routes of attack.

- Defend both Farms

Overview

This is the first mission where a Minelayer really comes in handy. The map is filled with congested choke points that are ideal for mines.

The essence of this mission—at least, if you follow the strategies in this chapter—is to foil small attacks with the Minelayer while handling substantial 'Mech forces with your own 'Mechs.

Don't be discouraged if you have to try this mission more than once. Speed and good mine placement are both required, and a single oversight can send you back to the drawing board.

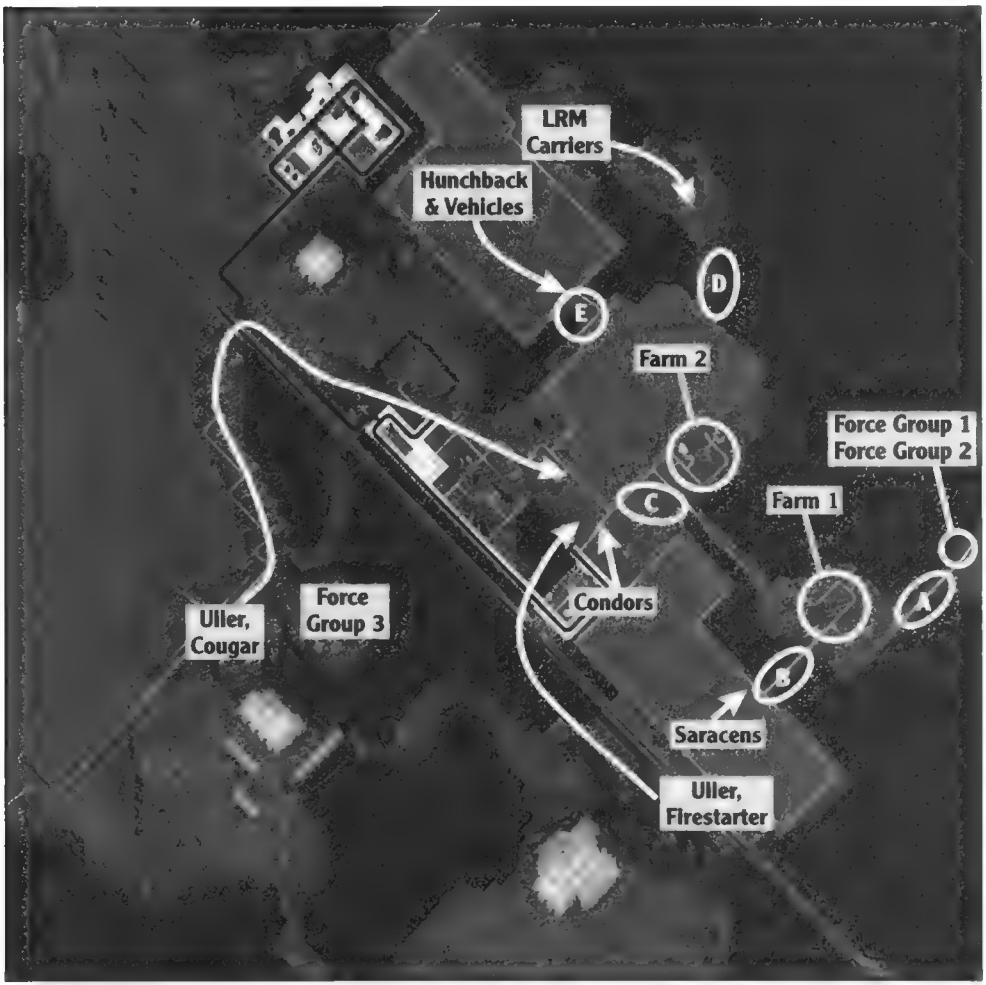


Fig. 6-8. Battle Map of Mission 1-5.

Recommended Forces

Your Drop Weight Limit is 240 tons. It's a good idea to use all your weight on this mission because it's pretty difficult—plus, you'll get paid well just for winning, so the low drop weight bonus isn't as crucial at it might be otherwise.

You should purchase and use a Minelayer for this mission. The Minelayer can seal off possible avenues of attack so you don't have to worry about defending several locations at once.

Place four 'Mechs in Force Group 1, the Minelayer in Force Group 2, and a final 'Mech in Force Group 3.

You'll have one Large and five Small Artillery Strikes for this mission.

TIP *It's possible to win this mission without a Minelayer, but it requires a great deal of scrambling around and chasing small vehicles. The method outlined in the Strategy Blueprint will help you avoid just that.*

Strategy Blueprint

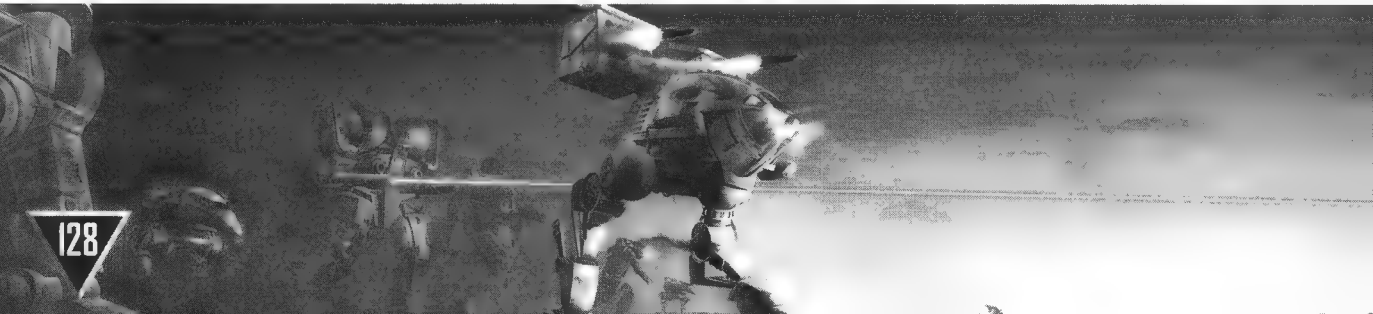
After your forces hit the drop area, send the 'Mechs from Force Group 1 toward the area labeled "C" on the Battle Map. Also, send the lone 'Mech in Force Group 3 toward Farm 1.

Meanwhile, the Minelayer should quickly lay a row of mines all along the pass marked "A" on the map.

When Pass A is mined, have the Minelayer hurry to lay mines all along Pass B, and leave the single light 'Mech from Force Group 3 to defend Farm 1.

Eventually a group of four *Saracens* will approach from the south and try to filter north through Pass B in an attempt to attack Farm 1. Watch them approach, and allow them to detonate most of the mines in the Pass. Use a small artillery strike to help destroy them if you'd like. If any *Saracens* get through the mines, use the lone 'Mech you left behind to destroy it.

Shortly after the *Saracens* attack, a group of four *Condors* will attack Farm 2. Since you've already stationed most of your 'Mechs at Point C, they're now in a good



position to greet the *Condors.* Destroy the *Condors,* meanwhile starting to move your Minelayer toward area "D".

TIP *Leave Force Group 3 near Farm 1, just to handle the lone SRM Carrier that straggles up from the south to attack. When your Force Group kills the SRM Carrier, you can have it join the 'Mechs in Force Group 1.*

When the *Saracens* and *Condors* have been dealt with, have your Minelayer thoroughly mine the pass at Point D. Move quickly! When area "D" has been mined, also mine area "E".

Soon, an enemy force will appear from the northwest. Have your Minelayer retreat. A pair of LRM Carriers will try to approach from the Point D pass but will be destroyed by your mines; a pair of SRM Carriers accompanied by a *Hunchback-A* and a fleet of *Savannah Masters* will approach from the Point E pass. This group will be damaged by your mines, but the *Hunchback* and a few *Savannah Masters* will probably survive. Have your 'Mechs destroy the stragglers.

You should now have a moment of peace. Instruct your Minelayer to lay minefields in the vicinity of Point C and all around the southern edge of Farm 2.

Now you'll face two final threats. An *Uller* and *Firestarter* team will attack from the southeast, and meanwhile an *Uller* and *Cougar* team will attack from the southwest. Both will try to take out Farm 2, taking (roughly) the paths indicated on the Battle Map. You can use your remaining artillery strikes on them as they approach.

Have all your 'Mechs gather near Point C. When the bad guys get close, meet them with concentrated fire. Do your best to distract them. This is crucial! Damage enemy 'Mechs until you've got their attention and they're firing at you, then attack any 'Mechs that are going after the Farm. Those Farm buildings are very fragile, so it's absolutely key that you distract enemy 'Mechs by shooting them.

You win when these four 'Mechs are destroyed.

TIP *If you failed, try again and this time try to make better use of your mines. Lay minefields faster, and make them bigger. Softening up enemy 'Mechs with mines makes the mission a* lot *easier.*

Sometimes the final battle does you in. Do your best to make sure that Farm 2 isn't damaged at all before the final assault, and try to make sure that you're distracting enemy 'Mechs instead of allowing them to stand near the Farms and fire at them unhindered.

Mission 1-6: Liberate Kaio Industrial Zone

Clan and Bondsmen forces have entrenched themselves in a defensive position near Kaio Industrial Zone in the mountainous Weimar region. This position controls approaches that are vital to the second stage of the campaign. Thus, you must lead an assault on this defensive position.

The position you're attacking is well defended, thanks both to natural fortifications and man-made barriers. Furthermore, the infamous commander Akodo Haru is overseeing the defenses in his *Catapult* 'Mech. Expect a difficult fight.

- Destroy all enemy 'Mechs defending the Industrial Zone.

Overview

This mission offers three different paths to the enemy base. The first path is the most obvious one—along the road that leads right up to the base's main gate. This path is barred by a substantial checkpoint complete with Turrets, *Saracens* parked on a hill where they can snipe at you, and miscellaneous vehicles parked behind a concrete wall. (See the Battle Map for its location; it's labeled "Checkpoint".) Taking this path is one possible strategy, but it opens you up to a fair amount of abuse. Since destroying enemy vehicles is not one of your mission requirements, this is a bad path.

The second path leads through the forest. It's not readily visible, but if you study the map you'll see a mostly open path going through the trees. This path seems like a good idea, but if you take it you'll be ambushed by several hidden Pop-Up Turrets (see Battle Map). Taking this path is still a better idea than taking the main road, however.

The final path, the one recommended in the Strategy Blueprint, follows the southern coastline. This coastline is completely undefended, and offers a straight shot to the southern edge of the enemy base.

Recommended Forces

Your Drop Weight Limit for this mission is a hefty 300 tons, which should be more than enough. If you follow the strategy outlined below, you can lowball by as much as 30 tons very comfortably, and get by with even less if you're skillful.

Fig. 6-9. Battle Map of Mission 1-6.

There's really no need for speed in this mission. Big, heavy-hitting 'Mechs are a good choice. Just make sure they've got weapons with adequate range, because the *Catapult* you're trying to kill has lots of LRMs and likes to fight at extreme range. Therefore your 'Mechs need to have weapons with decent range—or at least be fast enough to close the gap and fire their shorter-range weapons.

You have one small artillery strike at your disposal.

Strategy Blueprint

When your forces hit the drop site, band them all together into one large group. Immediately set off to the southwest along the path illustrated on the Battle Map. By sticking to the coast you'll have a straight shot to the enemy base.

Eventually you'll find yourself at the edge of the enemy base. A thick concrete wall guards the base, but there are no Turrets to bother you. Blast a hole in the wall and proceed through it as quickly as possible.

Inside the wall, you'll have to fight a couple of patrolling SRM Carriers, followed by the four *J. Edgars* whose start location is noted on your Battle Map.

As you proceed along the indicated path, a group of six *Firestarters* will attack. Fall back toward the coast somewhat before fighting them in earnest. Concentrate fire on one *Firestarter* at a time.

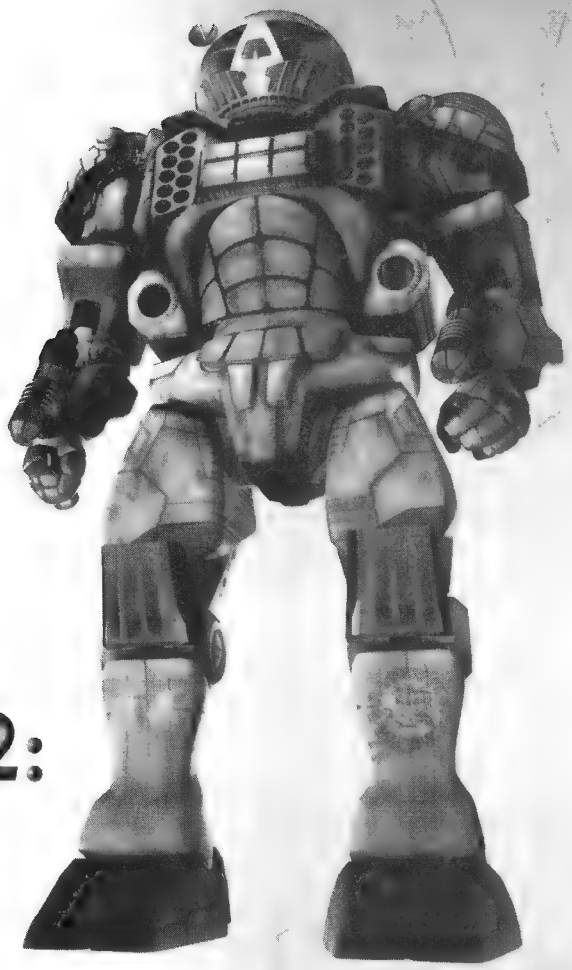
When you've given the *Firestarters* a good beating, the stragglers will run away. They aren't leaving the area completely, however—they're heading toward the *Catapult.* Shoot them as they run away, and hopefully you can pick off one or two of them.

Proceed north toward the *Catapult,* capturing the quadrant of Container Stacks marked on your map before initiating the final battle. There are valuable weapons in those warehouses.

When you reach the spot marked *"Catapult,"* you'll have to fight the *Catapult* itself, any surviving *Firestarters,* and a pair of LRM Carriers. Figure 6-10 shows the *Catapult* atop its hill.

Fig. 6-10. The Catapult **is on a small hill. If you want to get up there, approach from the west.**

Charge in and take out the *Catapult* as quickly as possible, then demolish the remaining *Firestarters* to win the mission. The *Catapult* and LRM Carriers are on a small hill, but if you loaded up on long-range weapons as suggested in "Recommended Forces," you shouldn't have a problem.



CHAPTER 7

OPERATION 2: SKYHOOK

In Operation Skyhook, you must disrupt the Clan's supply and communication lines. You'll intercept trains and convoys, destroy bases and communications dishes, and generally wreak havoc on the systems that the Smoke Jaguars have come to rely on. Expect challenging but rewarding missions, with definite risks but excellent salvage potential.

TIP *If the combat in any of these missions seems too difficult, remember that you can always buy a Refit Truck and then load up on Autocannons, Heavy Autocannons, and other ammo-intensive weapons, using the Truck to replenish ammo as necessary. This strategy won't always help, but it's a viable option in missions where you need firepower and aren't in a hurry.*

MISSION 2-1: ESCORT HUNCHBACK TO SAFETY

A Kurita Special Forces operative has obtained valuable information about enemy supply and communication lines. Unfortunately, getting her to safety will be difficult, as she's currently trapped on the other side of the Clan-controlled Froese River.

Your task is to locate the Kurita operative's stolen *Hunchback IIc* and escort it to the Extraction Point to the south.

Clan air strikes are a possibility; destroy Aerospace Spotters to negate certain air strikes. Also, watch out for Clan Minelayers.

- Escort *Hunchback IIc* to the Extraction Point.

Overview

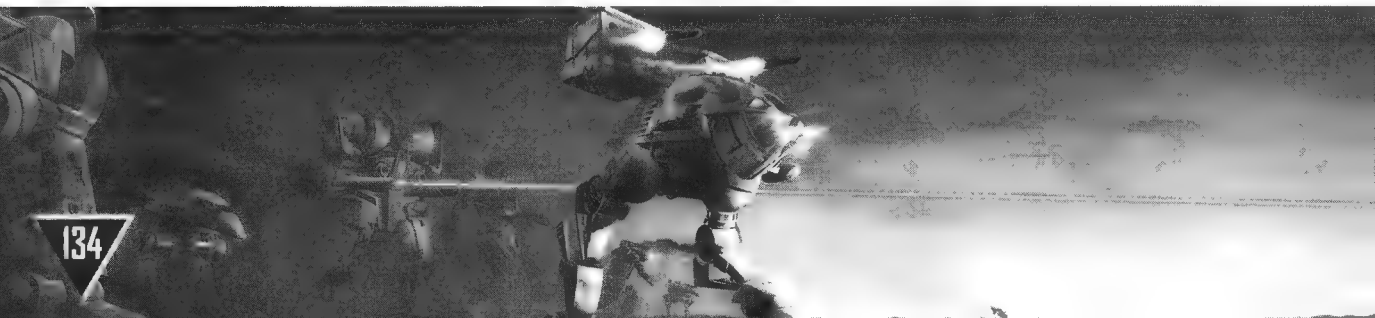
This mission takes place on a map bisected by a river. Two man-made bridges and one land bridge cross the river, and the man-made bridges are likely to get destroyed if you are not careful. Thus, your best bet is to take the land bridge.

Your *Hunchback IIc* is tough but it'll be stuck by itself throughout the early stages of the mission. You'll have to learn to juggle two entirely separate groups of 'Mechs simultaneously if you hope to succeed.

Recommended Forces

Your Drop Weight Limit is 150 tons. This is a mission where speed and agility aren't terribly necessary, so load up on good-sized 'Mechs with heavy-hitting weapons. Hopefully you'll have recovered a few Clan 'Mechs by now—these, too, are appropriate.

You have four small artillery strikes and one Sensor Probe for this mission.



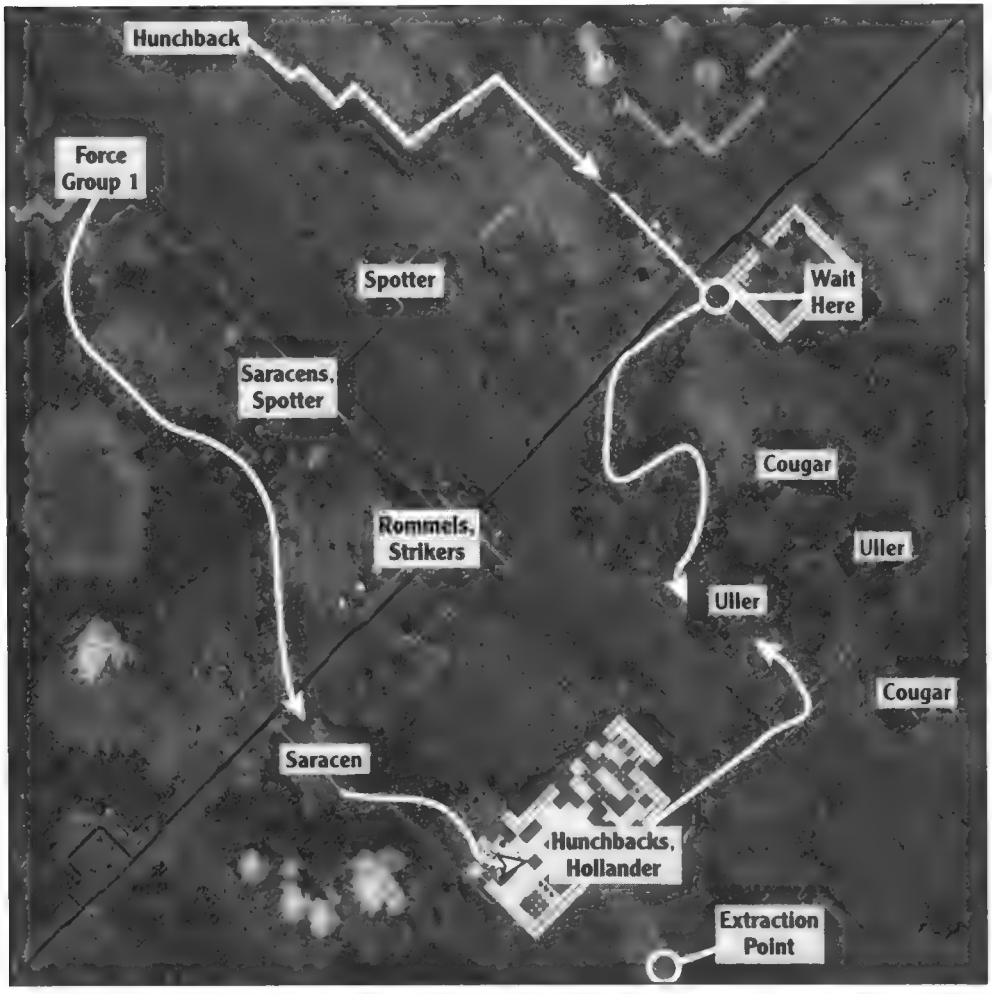


Figure 7-1. Battle Map of Mission 2-1.

Strategy Blueprint

Your forces start out split up. Force Group 1 is dropped south of the river, while the Kurita agent in her stolen *Hunchback IIc* is located to the north (see the Battle Map).

Immediately start the *Hunchback IIc* moving toward the spot marked "Wait Here" on the Battle Map. A *Harasser* will overtake it; kill the *Harasser* and just keep moving.

Meanwhile, as the *Hunchback IIc* lumbers toward its waiting place, the 'Mechs of Force Group 1 need to follow the path outlined on the Battle Map. Note that this path leads through lightly forested areas, but two or three weapon volleys are enough to destroy trees and clear the way.

When the Force Group 1 'Mechs reach the *Saracen* marked on the Battle Map, have them destroy it and then continue along their path. Meanwhile the *Hunchback IIc* should simply wait at the spot marked "Wait Here." Occasional *Harassers* might attack it there, but it can hold its own for now.

Use a Sensor Probe to reveal the locations of two *Hunchbacks* and a *Hollander II* whose approximate location is marked on the Battle Map. There are lots of explosive tanks in this general area, as seen in Figure 7-2. You can use small artillery strikes or weapon fire to detonate these tanks as the *Hunchbacks* and *Hollander II* approach your 'Mechs, thus destroying one or more of them. This requires some timing, but is vital since these three foes are extremely tough—more than a match for Force Group 1.

TIP *You should be able to kill two 'Mechs flat-out by detonating the explosive tanks. Your mission is in serious jeopardy if you don't manage to destroy at least one of them in this way.*

Fig. 7-2. Use these explosive tanks to destroy enemy BattleMechs.

After killing these three enemies with the help of the explosive tanks, send your Force Group 1 'Mechs north across the land bridge as indicated on the Battle Map. Simultaneously send the *Hunchback IIc* south from its waiting spot. Ideally the two forces should meet in the forest, as shown on the Battle Map.

The *Hunchback IIc* undoubtedly will be attacked by the various Clan 'Mechs hiding in this area as it proceeds south, but it should just keep moving. Force Group 1 can intercept and destroy these 'Mechs. A few *Harassers* or *Condors* also might be filtering in from the west around this time, but again, Force Group 1 can handle them.

Send the *Hunchback IIc* south across the land bridge toward the Extraction Point. Have your remaining 'Mechs follow it at a slight distance, destroying anything that tries to follow them.

When all your 'Mechs are huddled around the Extraction Point, you'll win the mission.

TIP *When the mission's over you'll find that you've got a* Hunchback IIc. *It'll come in handy during subsequent missions requiring serious firepower.*

MISSION 2-2: DESTROY LOCAL POWER GENERATORS

The Kurita operative recovered in the last mission has informed Battalion that the Jaguars are using the local industrial base to manufacture parts and fuel. The base itself must remain intact, so Battalion has decided to destroy the two Power Generators along the Ai-Ki River that fuel it. It's your job to take out these Power Generators.

Your secondary task is to verify the existence of Smoke Jaguar supply caches in the area. Take control of these caches if you can find them; the rewards will certainly be worth the risk.

- Destroy local Power Generators.
- Get all units to Extraction Point.

Overview

This is a deceptively simple mission. To reach both power stations, all you have to do is follow the road—but the road is fraught with perils. Your enemies are, for the most part, vehicles—but they include heavy hitters such as *Bulldogs* that can deal a crippling blow to your forces in the blink of an eye. Be careful!

This is a very simple scenario if you ignore the Clan's supply containers and stick strictly to the task of destroying the Power Generators. However, the plan outlined below involves taking over most of these containers for extra salvage—trust us, the salvage is worth it.

Recommended Forces

You should pack a few large 'Mechs into your 200-ton drop limit instead of several small 'Mechs. These large 'Mechs should be able to withstand the punishment dealt out by the heavy-hitting enemies you'll encounter in this mission.

Also, try to include lots of energy weapons in your 'Mechs' payloads. There are lots of minor targets in this mission, and lots of opportunities to waste ammunition. If you *do* choose to pack weapons that run out of ammo quickly, try to concentrate them on one particular 'Mech and don't let it fight minor threats such as vehicles and Turrets. Instead, save its ammunition for enemy 'Mechs.

Optionally, use heavy-hitting, ammo-intensive weapons, and bring along a Refit Truck.

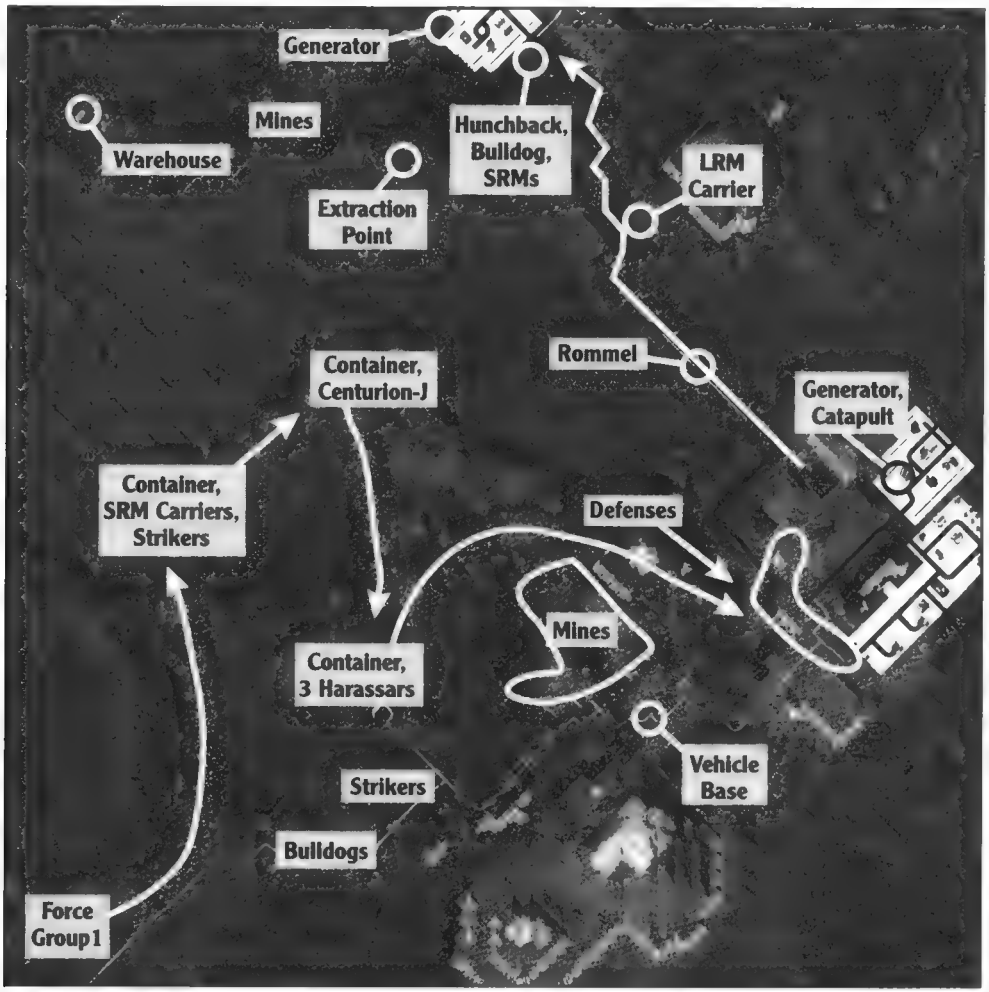


Fig. 7-3. Battle Map of Mission 2-2.

Strategy Blueprint

From your drop point, proceed north along the path drawn on your Battle Map. By dodging the road, you'll avoid a pair of *Bulldogs.*

Proceed to the spot marked "Container, SRM Carriers, *Strikers.*" Destroy the vehicles you find there and capture the Container for loot.

Move on to the next Container, which is guarded by a lone *Centurion.* Repeat the process.

Now dip back to the south and visit a Container guarded by three *Harassers.* If you don't venture *too* far south you won't rouse the *Bulldogs* parked on the road—but you'll probably end up fighting a pair of *Strikers* parked nearby. Capture the Container when you're done fighting.

Loop back to the north, still following the path marked on your Battle Map. Follow the path carefully to avoid the small minefield located nearby. Destroy any Perimeter Alarms you encounter along the way, or else several unmanned vehicles at the Vehicle Base will come after you.

You'll now encounter the spot labeled "Defenses" on your map. It consists of a couple lines of Turrets, a pair of *Bulldogs,* a *Striker,* an SRM Carrier, and a *Commando.* Instead of charging into this area, pick away at the defenses and fall back when the *Bulldogs* attack. When all mobile defenses have been drawn out and destroyed, pick away the Turrets and proceed.

North of the well-defended area is a cluster of buildings. Among these buildings is a Generator labeled "Main Power" (see Figure 7-4) guarded by a *Catapult.* Destroy the *Catapult* and the Generator.

Now follow the second path outlined on your Battle Map. It leads away from the main Power Generator across a long bridge, past a *Rommel* and an LRM Carrier you must destroy, and up to a base with another Generator (this one labeled "Auxiliary Power").

Follow the path slowly, and beware the tough strike force guarding the new Generator. It consists of a *Hunchback,* a *Bulldog,* and some SRM Carriers. Also, a small squad of Elementals will harass you as you close in on the Generator itself.

And keep your eye on the nearby Fuel Tank farm, you may have the opportunity to make good use of it.

Fig. 7-4. Destroy the main Power Generator and half your work is done.

Once the defenders have been beaten, blow up the nearby auxiliary Power Generator and march your 'Mechs to the Extraction Point located somewhat to the southwest. The mission ends when all your 'Mechs are close to the Extraction Point.

TIP *There's another Container Stack you can capture in the extreme northwestern part of the map. It's guarded by a* Bulldog *and a pair of* Harassers. *We recommend avoiding this one because it's off the beaten path, and your 'Mechs will probably be battered by the time they've destroyed the two Power Generators. If you do indeed try to capture this final container, though, hug the coastline as you approach—otherwise you'll get caught in the little minefield marked on your Battle Map.*

If you have difficulty getting through this mission, try again and feel free to avoid some of the better-defended Container Stack (like the one guarded by the Centurion*). Also, realize that most of the tough enemies in this mission can be defeated by specific tactics.* Bulldogs *and* Hunchbacks *can be picked apart at long range, and* Catapults *can be picked apart at close range. Try to exploit your enemies' weaknesses.*

A final possible tactic is to use the projectile weapon/Refit Truck combination we've been mentioning all along.

MISSION 2-3: DESTROY THE CONVOY

Your task is to efficiently destroy a lightly guarded Bondsman convoy. You'll be dropped on the other side of the river from the convoy, which is why Battalion recomends using jump-capable 'Mechs.

Bakersville, the nearby suburb, is reputedly seething with pro-Clan sentiment. Thus, you should be wary of hostile citizens.

- Destroy the convoy.

Overview

At the start of this mission, your 'Mechs' sensors will detect the convoy on the opposite side of the river. The convoy's ultimate destination is a small base in the southeast corner of the map.

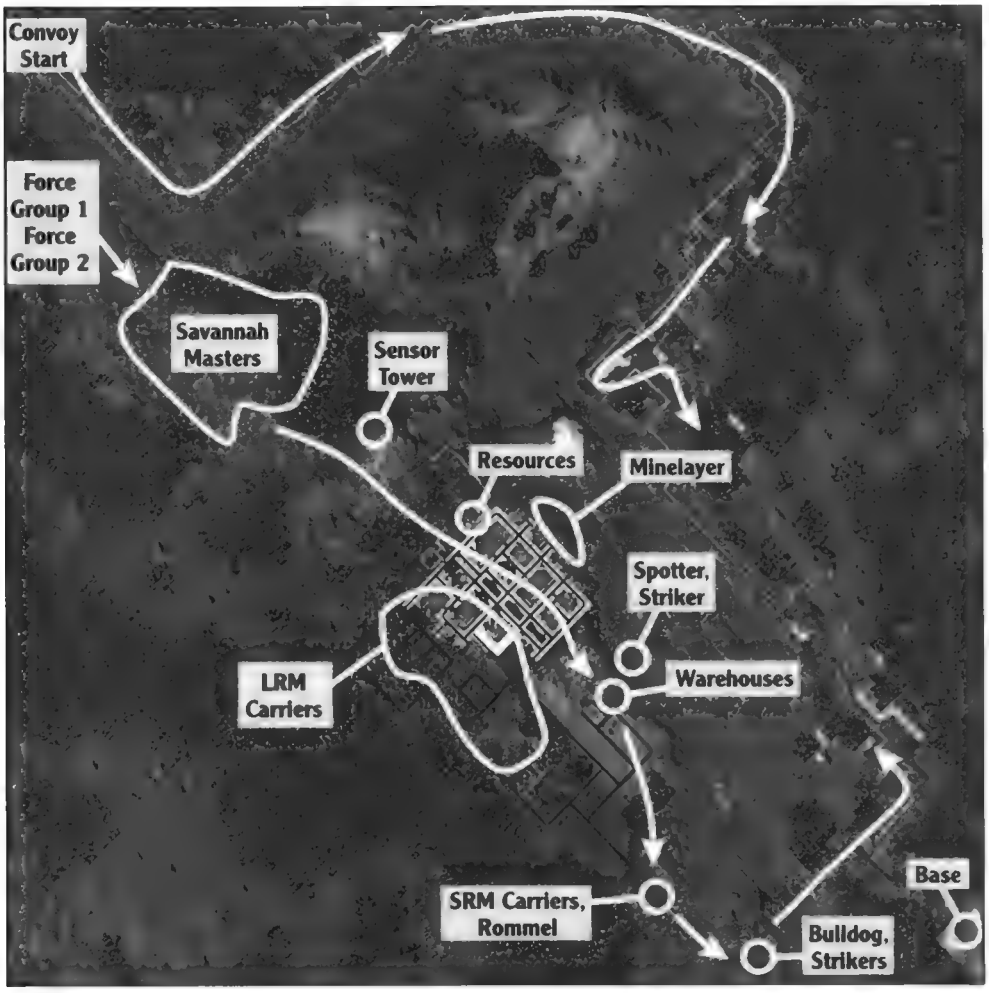


Figure 7-5. Battle Map of Mission 2-3.

Although the mission briefing recommends using jump-capable 'Mechs, this is unnecessary; the Strategy Blueprint explains how to beat the missions without a single jump-capable 'Mech. There are bridges leading across the river near the southeast corner of the map. Your task is to lead your 'Mechs to these bridges and have them cross, then intercept the convoy before it reaches the base. Loitering isn't a good idea, but the convoy isn't terribly fast—so you don't have to worry about getting outrun. Just make sure you keep moving toward your goal.

The convoy itself is lightly guarded by a *Rommel*, two *Strikers*, an Aerospace Spotter, two *Cougar-Js* (that may jump across the river to attack you if you walk along the shore), and two *Hunchback IIc-Ws*. It's possible to destroy all enemy units that

guard the convoy, but this is difficult to do without letting a Truck sneak past you. Thus, Trucks are your primary concern.

Recommended Forces

Your Drop Weight Limit is a substantial 300 tons. As mentioned above, jump 'Mechs are not necessary or even advisable for this mission. Instead, take several medium to heavy 'Mechs with potent weapons. Speed shouldn't be an issue as long as you don't loiter.

You have two small artillery strikes, one Sensor Probe, and one Camera Drone for this mission.

Strategy Blueprint

Your Force Groups are dropped side by side. Unless you decided to try using jump-capable 'Mechs, have your 'Mechs stay clear of the river and head southeast along the path indicated on the Battle Map.

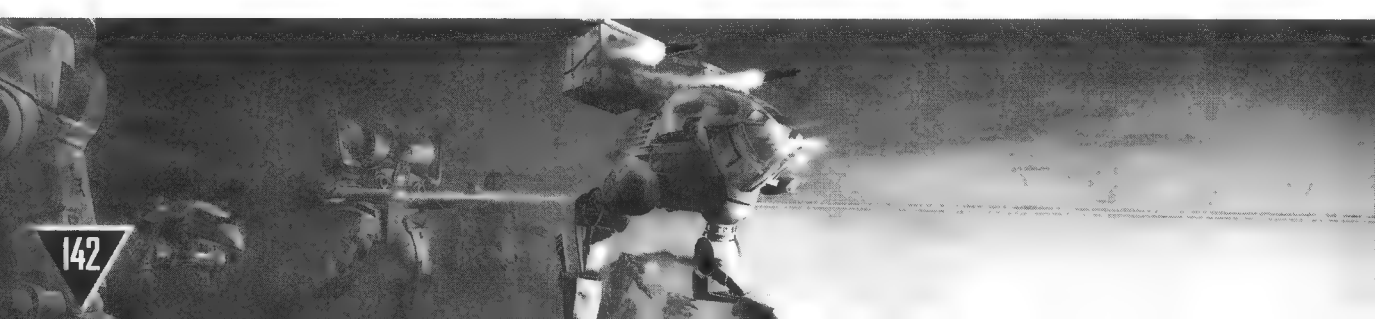
TIP *If you hurry, you can run your forces up to the riverbank as soon as they're dropped and target one of the enemy BattleMechs guarding the convoy. You'll probably be able to destroy the 'Mech you target. Note that if you fire at a* Cougar, *it may jump across the river to get a better shot at you.*

If you do decide to take potshots at the enemy, just be sure not to waste too much time doing it. Remember, you're under time pressure to head off the rest of the convoy.

Send your 'Mechs southeast along the path shown on the Battle Map. They'll soon come across a swarm of *Savannah Masters.* It's not necessary to stop and fight them; your 'Mechs will destroy them as they pass by.

Next your forces will approach the Sensor Tower indicated on the Battle Map. Here they're met by several enemy vehicles: two *Bulldogs,* two *Strikers,* one *Saracen,* and two Harassers. They won't cause you much trouble if you keep your 'Mechs together and concentrate your fire.

After destroying the vehicles, keep following the path into the city.



As you enter the city, capture the Container Stack shown on the Battle Map.

The city itself is occupied by several LRM Carriers. Keep your 'Mechs together and take the LRM Carriers out as you find them. Don't be in so much of a hurry that you let your fastest 'Mechs get away from the slower ones; keep them all together for optimal firepower.

The road leading out of the city is surrounded by gas tanks. Blow them up from a safe distance. (If you don't, the Aerospace Spotter or the *Striker* just down the road will.) Alternatively, you could walk around the tanks to the south, but if you do you'll run into more LRM Carriers.

As soon as the Aerospace Spotter marked on the Battle Map is visible, take it out. Then deal with the *Striker.* Once the enemy vehicles have been destroyed, capture the nearby Resource Warehouses shown on the Battle Map.

Follow the road out of town. As you near the bridge, you'll be greeted by a pair of SRM Carriers and a *Rommel.* Destroy them and proceed toward the bridge.

TIP *Around this time you should use your Sensor Probe on the dark area to the northeast. This will give you some advance warning of where, exactly, the convoy is located.*

There are three enemy vehicles to deal with on the other side of the bridge: a *Bulldog* and two *Strikers.* Instead of crossing the bridge, try to bait these vehicles into crossing, thus allowing your forces time to pick them off from a distance. If they don't take the bait, just charge all your 'Mechs across in a tight group and maximize firepower.

Fig. 7-6. Concentrate on the trucks in the convoy rather than the escort 'Mechs.

On the other side of the bridge, follow the road north. You'll find a spot where the road proceeds through a short canyon seen in Figure 7-6. This canyon is the perfect place to stop and wait for the convoy. After your forces are in position, use your Camera Drone on the road to the north. This reveals the road, allowing you to accurately drop your small artillery strikes when the convoy enters the area.

TIP *Avoid the base marked on your Battle Map. It contains a pair of jump-capable* Ravens; *if you don't go near the base, the* Ravens *will leave you alone.*

The only significant structure in the base is a Gate Control. If you had a jump 'Mech and wanted to be clever you could order the 'Mech to jump inside the base, capture the Gate Control, and thus effectively lock the convoy out of the base.

The first member of the convoy to arrive is the Aerospace Spotter. Destroy it immediately, as it will start calling in air strikes if you don't.

As the rest of the convoy approaches, try to focus on the trucks as much as possible; destroy them quickly, *then* concentrate on 'Mechs and combat vehicles. Always target the convoy trucks that are farthest south.

TIP *There's a highly explosive Fuel Truck near the back of the convoy. Target it with weapons fire or an artillery strike, and you might be able to take out a few nearby vehicles or 'Mechs as well.*

You don't need to destroy the 'Mechs or combat vehicles guarding the convoy to complete the mission. When the last convoy truck has been destroyed, you win.

Mission 2-4: Destroy the Hyperpulse Communication Dishes

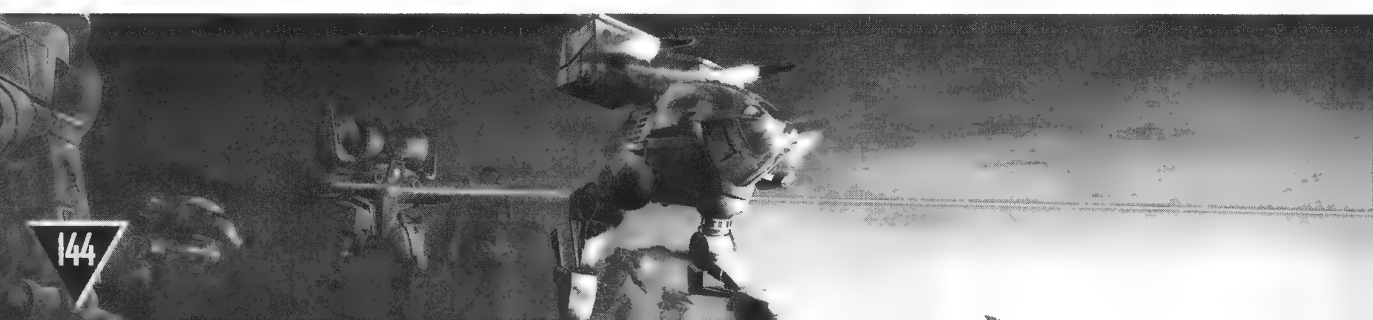
Intelligence reports that an enemy communiqué requesting additional Jaguar forces will be sent from Hyperpulse Generators (HPGs) within a heavily fortified base at the edge of Yokohama. Your task is to destroy the HPGs before the message can be sent, thus ensuring that Jaguar reinforcements are not sent to Port Arthur.

Your Force Groups will be dropped approximately 15 minutes before the HPGs power up to send their message. If you fail to destroy the HPGs before the 15 minutes elapse, you fail the mission.

- Destroy Smoke Jaguar Hyperpulse Generators.

Overview

This mission can be played as a full bore slugfest or a quick raid. The Strategy Blueprint explains the former course of action, though the latter is also feasible. Your



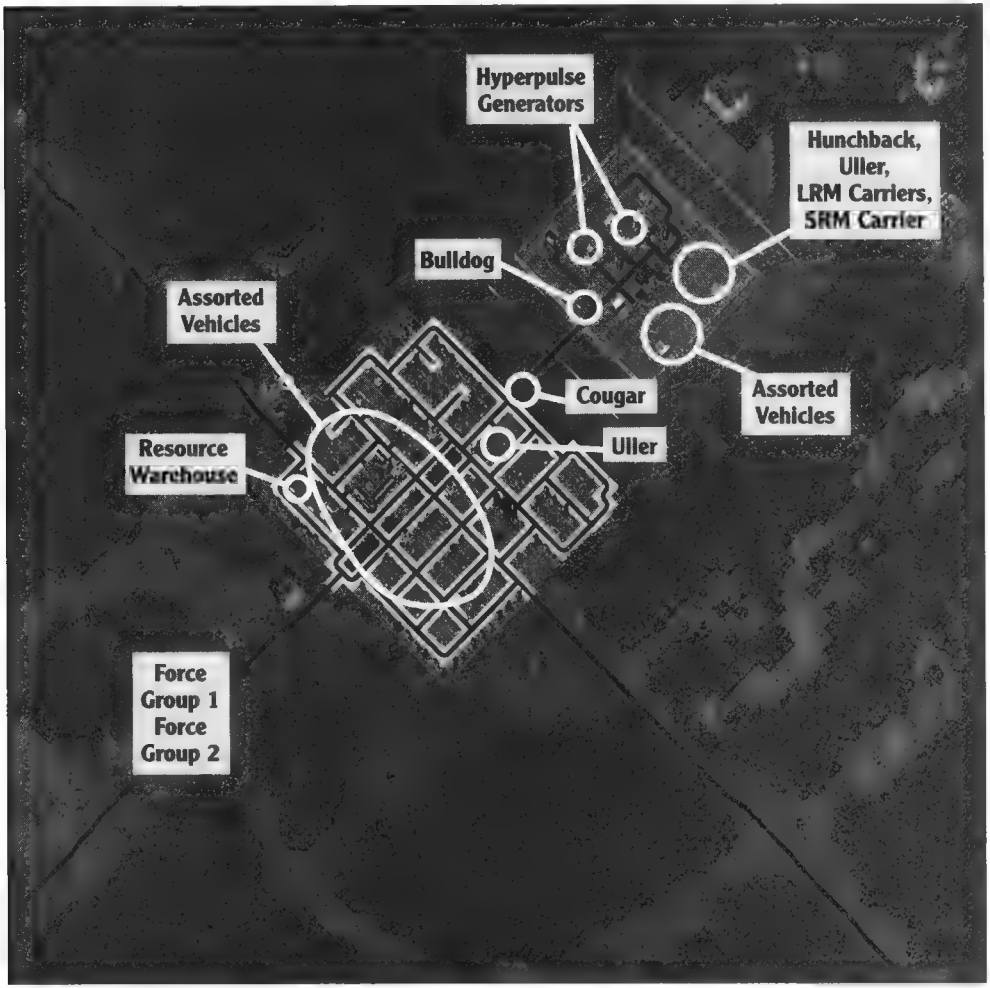


Figure 7-7. Battle Map of Mission 2-4.

BattleMechs start out at a point southwest of the base, and they can either march straight up and conquer it, or circle around back and attack from the rear.

Though this is a timed mission, the clock should not be a limiting factor. Even if you proceed at a fairly leisurely pace, you'll be able to finish well ahead of schedule.

Recommended Forces

Your Drop Weight Limit is a massive 400 tons. Thus, you'll probably be using most of the 'Mechs in your possession. If you haven't already bought an *Atlas* or similarly heavy 'Mech, we recommend that you buy one now.

Don't worry about your heavy 'Mechs' lack of speed. As previously stated, speed is not vital in this mission. What's truly important is that you bring along massive

'Mechs with serious punch, the better to squash the hordes of vehicles and BattleMechs you'll encounter as you attack the base. Long-range weapons such as PPCs are preferred, since you'll face numerous *Strikers* and LRM Carriers.

Since this is a mission of full-scale combat, we recommend that you use most of your drop weight. Low-balling this mission too severely tends to result in extra casualties, and ends up costing you more than you save.

You have two small artillery strikes and one Sensor Probe for this mission.

Strategy Blueprint

Both of your Force Groups are dropped at the same spot, on a road southwest of the city. Gather all your forces into one colossal group and march them slowly northeast toward the city.

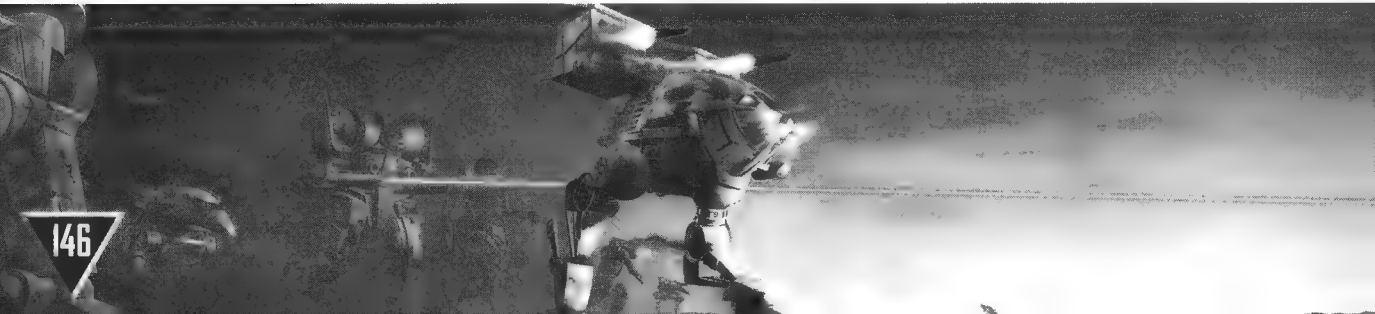
A light scattering of enemy vehicles is located inside the city. Capture the Resource Warehouse indicated on the Battle Map and march through the city, destroying enemy vehicles with concentrated fire. Move very slowly, concentrating on keeping your forces together.

There are a number of Perimeter Alarms scattered throughout the city. *Don't destroy them.*

TIP *The Perimeter Alarms "wake up" two groups of enemy forces within the walled base you're trying to attack. One group consists of a* Hunchback IIc, *an* Uller, *and assorted vehicles. The other consists of assorted vehicles. All these 'Mechs and vehicles are un-crewed as the mission begins.*

Theoretically if you destroyed all Perimeter Alarms you could then dash up to the base, break inside, and destroy these 'Mechs and vehicles before their pilots got to them. In practice, however, the pilots slowly filter into their 'Mechs and vehicles as the mission progresses, so you'd end up fighting most of them anyway.

Feel free to take out the Perimeter Alarms and try a "mad dash" strategy, but this walkthrough recommends a slow, grinding assault, in which you'll actually benefit from setting off the alarms.



Eventually the Alarms go off. Remain in the city, perhaps moving ever so slightly toward the base containing the Hyperpulse Generators. Vehicles and BattleMechs will pour out of the base and charge toward your 'Mechs.

Deal with these enemies methodically, concentrating fire on one unit at a time. Killing enemies outside the base is much easier than rushing the base and attacking it while the enemies are still inside, because then you have to deal with walls and Turrets at the same time.

Keep destroying 'Mechs and vehicles, staying well away from the actual base. When no more mobile enemies are forthcoming, slowly approach the walled base and pick off the Laser and Cannon Turrets guarding the wall from long range. Then, blast a hole in the gate and march inside. A few LRM Carriers and other vehicles are still in there; use your artillery strikes to help destroy them quickly.

Fig. 7-8. These Hyperpulse Generators are defended by walls. You can either shoot through the walls or capture the nearby Gate Control Buildings to open the gates.

Once all vehicles in the base are gone, capture all available structures inside the base. This includes a number of structures containing salvaged parts.

Finally, destroy both Hyperpulse Generators. The mission is a success when they're both demolished.

TIP

There is an alternate way of beating this mission. Immediately to the southeast of your 'Mechs' initial drop point is a path that leads through the forest. Have your 'Mechs take this path until they reach a paved road, then take the road a few meters northwest. To the north you'll notice another path that leads the rest of the way around the base—it's accessible if your forces destroy a few trees.

This second path is guarded by a few Perimeter Alarms and Pop-Up Turrets, but little else. It leads all the way around to the very back of the base.

Have your 'Mechs follow this path, then punch a hole in the base's rearwall and dash inside as quickly as possible. They can destroy the MechWarrior Barracks inside the base to prevent a dangerous Hunchback IIc from powering up, then quickly destroy the HyperPulse Generators.

Fighting the rest of the enemy forces is not necessary; just destroy the Generators and you'll win.

Some players may prefer this mode of attack, but bear in mind that it isn't perfect. You'll miss out on some valuable salvage if you go right for the Hyperpulse Generators, and if you aren't fast enough it's easy to get swamped by the base's multiple defenders.

Alternatively, you can slug it out and try to destroy all defenders, then carefully chisel away at the Hunchback IIc in hopes of salvaging it.

MISSION 2-5: INTERCEPT THE TRAIN

A vital Jaguar supply train is moving through the area, escorted by a contingent of fast BattleMechs. Furthermore, additional forces have been deployed along the route the train will take.

Your task is to destroy every car in this train before it reaches its destination.

- Intercept and destroy the enemy supply train.

Overview

From your starting position, there are three ways to get to the train tracks. The southern route has one *Centurion* stationed near the river as shown on the Battle Map. Unless you feel the need to gamble and try for lots of salvage, this route is not recommended. You'll need healthy 'Mechs to deal with the substantial guard escorting the supply train.

The middle route follows the road as shown on the Battle Map. If you take this route, five *Rommels* await you on the opposite side of the bridge. They are much less damaging to your 'Mechs than the *Centurions,* and destroying them should not be a problem. This is the route recommended in the Strategy Blueprint.

The northern route, while completely unguarded, forces your 'Mechs to walk a good distance and takes them quite far north while the train is busy heading south. Thus, taking this route results in a mad dash to catch up with the train. Theoretically, you can take this route and destroy the entire train quickly, but in

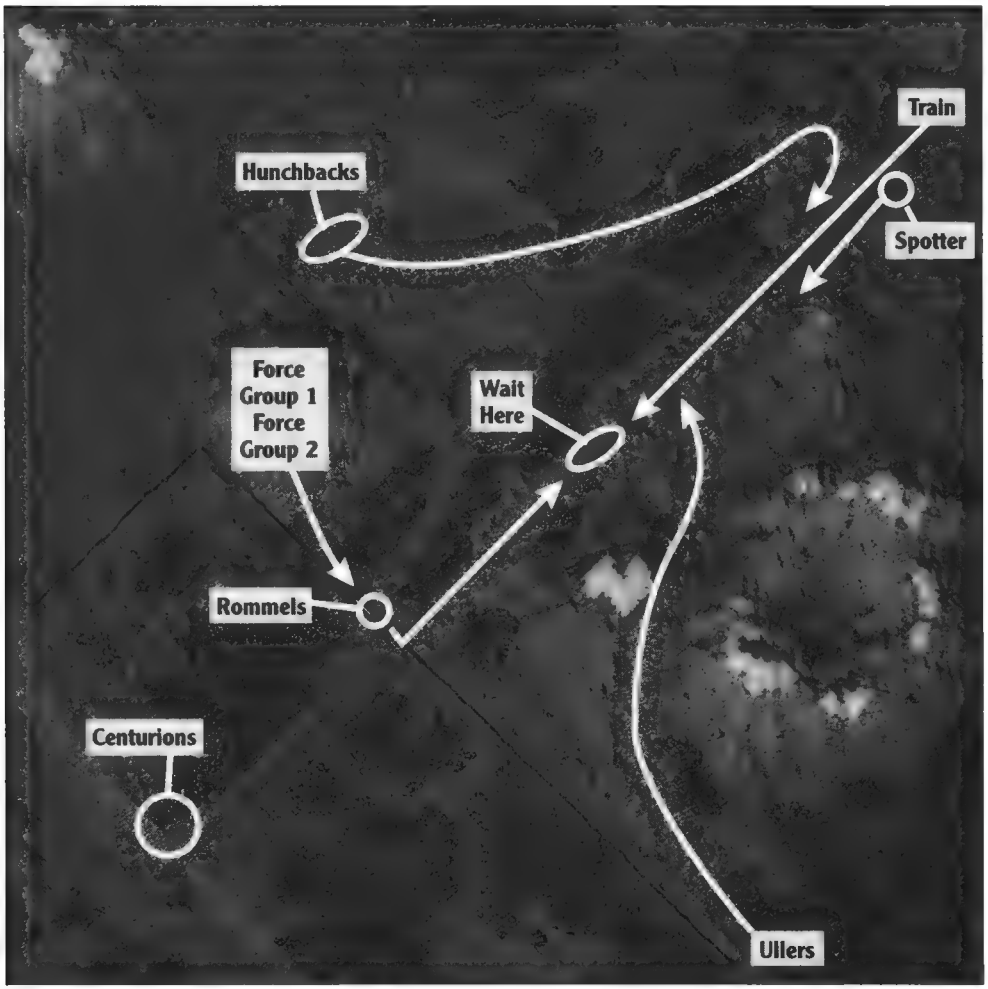


Figure 7-9. Battle Map of Mission 2-5.

practice it's hard to catch up—and when the train reaches the *Rommels* you'll have yet another set of headaches.

There are seven 'Mechs escorting the supply train: four *Ullers* and three jump-capable *Hunchbacks*. Because it takes a while to destroy that many enemy 'Mechs, it's a good idea to destroy the train engine as soon as possible. This causes the rest of the train to derail so you can deal with it at your leisure.

Recommended Forces

Your Drop Weight Limit is 240 tons, and there's only enough DropShip slots for eight 'Mechs. You will need medium to heavy 'Mechs for this mission.

You'll probably want to use as much tonnage as possible. This is a combat-intensive mission.

You don't get any artillery strikes for this mission.

Strategy Blueprint

As you begin the mission, your 'Mechs' sensors will pick up three *Hunchback-Js* to the north, as shown on the Battle Map. However, the *Hunchbacks* soon begin to run and jump toward the east. There's not too much you can do with them now; you'll meet them later as they escort the train south.

From your drop point, send your 'Mechs southeast along the path drawn on your Battle Map. They'll soon run into the road. Follow the road until your 'Mechs reach the bridge.

There are five *Rommels* waiting for you on the other side of the bridge. However, they are no match for your 'Mechs. Bait them into crossing the bridge, and you'll have an easy time destroying them.

TIP *If you have fast 'Mechs or good sensors, you may arrive at the bridge soon enough to also notice a group of four* Ullers *moving from southeast to northwest. Again, don't worry about them yet. You'll encounter them later as they guard the train.*

Once the *Rommels* are destroyed, proceed across the bridge and follow the road until you encounter the railroad tracks. Unless you wasted a lot of time getting there, the supply train will still be far to the northeast, out of sensor range.

Head northeast along the tracks until you get to the point marked "Wait" on the Battle Map. This is an open area that will allow you some maneuvering room in the upcoming battle. Stay far enough away from the track so that you don't attract the attention of enemy 'Mechs sooner than you mean to.

The next order of business it to stop the train by destroying the engine, as seen in Figure 7-10. This will derail the rest of the cars, which you can destroy at your leisure once you've taken out the enemy 'Mechs.

The four *Ullers* and three *Hunchbacks* guarding the train will now attack. They can deal quite a lot of damage to your forces, so it's important to use concentrated fire

to eliminate first one 'Mech and then another. Move damaged 'Mechs toward the rear of the fight to keep them alive.

If you're skillful and lucky, you'll be able to beat all enemy 'Mechs with all of your 'Mechs and pilots more or less intact, although a few of them will probably have taken a serious beating.

Once the enemy 'Mechs are destroyed, methodically destroy any remaining railroad cars. The mission ends when the last one is demolished.

Fig. 7-10. Take out the train engine, and the rest of the train derails. Now you don't have to worry about letting it escape.

MISSION 2-6: CAPTURE AND DEFEND THE BASE

Your task is to capture an enemy base at Serpent Bay and defend it against possible counterattack. This mission requires precise timing: You'll fail if you don't manage to capture the Base HQ in under six minutes.

Note that since your task is to capture and *defend* the enemy base, it's better to capture resources such as Sensor Tower Control Buildings and Turret Control Towers than to destroy them outright. If left intact they can be put to use on your side.

- Capture enemy Base HQ
- Defend HQ from counterattack

Overview

This is not a terribly difficult mission if you approach it methodically. It may be a bit different than you expected, however: The act of capturing the base, which you might have expected to be very difficult, isn't really so tough. The trick lies in defending the base against the swarms of attackers who seek to destroy it.

The plan outlined in the Strategy Blueprint calls for a bit more legwork than absolutely necessary, but by scouring the map and destroying potential threats while they're still good distance from the base, you can make defending the base significantly easier.

There are several ways to approach this mission. We'll discuss one of them thoroughly in the Strategy Blueprint, and suggest a second strategy as well.

Recommended Forces

You get to carry 400 tons of power on this mission. You can low-ball it by 30 tons or so, but beyond that you might be asking for trouble.

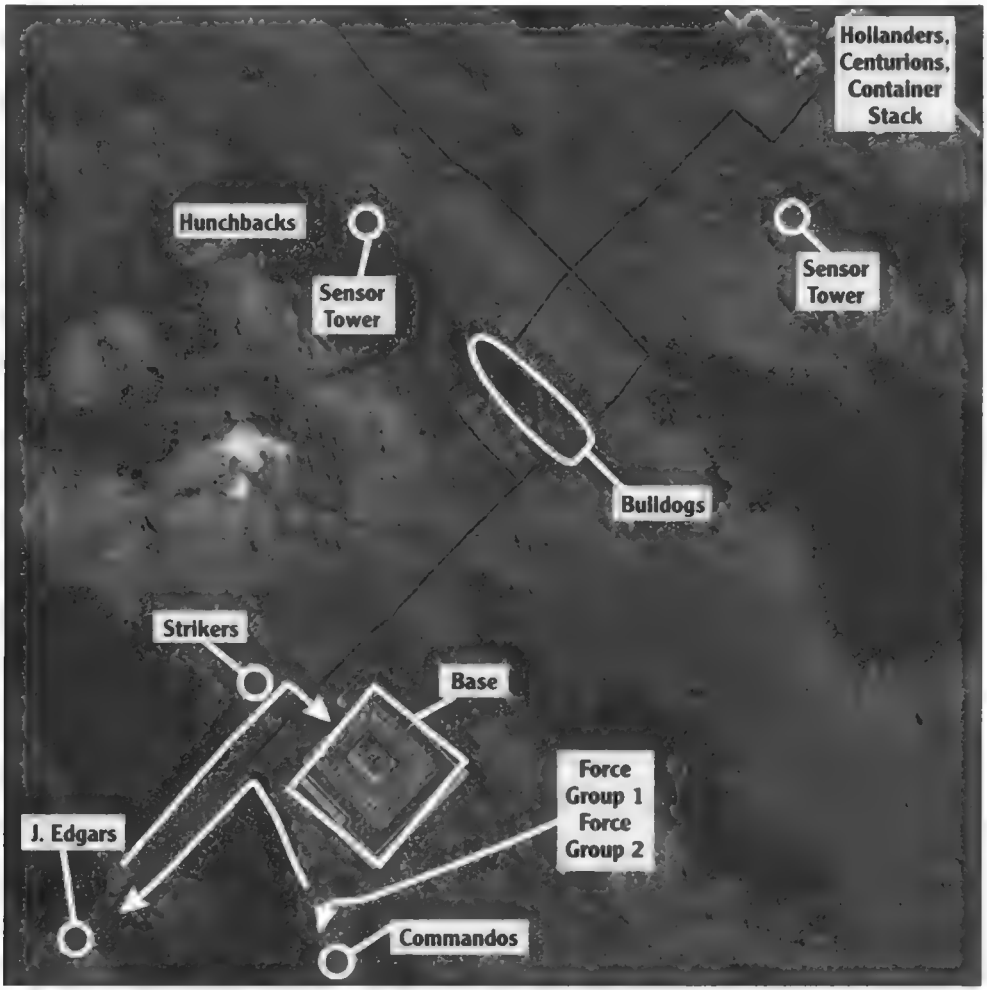
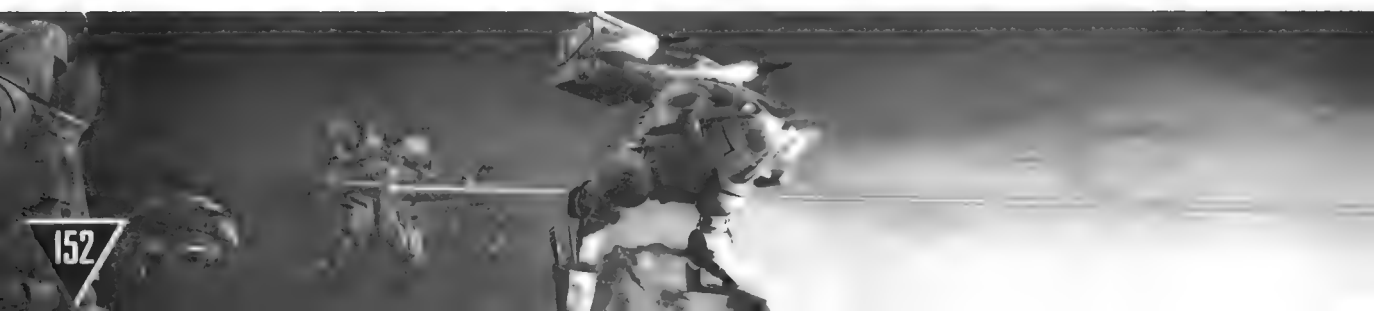


Figure 7-11. Battle Map of Mission 2-6.



Most of your 'Mechs can be relatively slow, heavy sluggers (though *Atlases* are a trifle *too* slow). At least one, however, should be extremely quick—an *Uller* or *Cougar* is recommended.

Long-range weapons are good for this mission, since you'll be facing enemies that are more intent on attacking your HQ Building than your 'Mechs. Long-range weapons allow your 'Mechs to engage the enemy early, and continue to pepper them as they try to run past your forces.

You get two small and two large artillery strikes for this mission.

Strategy Blueprint

Force Groups 1 and 2 are dropped to the same spot on the map. Immediately gather all your 'Mechs and guide them along the path drawn on the Battle Map.

TIP *Move quickly. If you delay too long, forces from distant corners of the map will converge on the base and make your task far more difficult. Also, the clock is ticking.*

As you follow this path, stay as far away from the base as possible. Destroy any units that spill out of the base; it's defended by an *Uller,* a trio of *Rommels,* and four *Harassers.*

Quickly proceed to the spot marked *Commandos* and destroy the pair of *Commandos* you find there with concentrated blasts.

Now send your 'Mechs northwest to the spot marked *"Strikers."* There, you'll encounter a trio of *Strikers.* Also, any base defenders you didn't fight earlier are likely to spill out and attack you here. Remain outside the range of the base's Cannon Turrets as you fight them.

Remain outside the base until you're quite sure every defender (or *almost* every defender) has left. Then have a single light 'Mech dash inside the base at full speed and capture the Turret Control Towers at the center of the base (see Figure 7-12). The Turrets are now yours. Also have the 'Mech capture the Sensor Control Tower.

Look at the clock. If you still have over a minute left, don't capture the HQ Building yet. Wait until your time is almost up, thus giving your other 'Mechs time to destroy the *J. Edgars* and return.

Fig. 7-12. Here's the center of the base. You'll need to enter the base itself from the west, then circle to the east to get up the base's central hill.

Meanwhile, have the remainder of your 'Mechs proceed south toward the spot marked *"J. Edgars"* at that spot, or somewhere along the road leading to down it. Destroy all the tanks you find there and send your 'Mechs back up to the base.

Your captured Sensor Towers will soon give you a view of approaching forces: two *Hunchback IIs* from the northwest, and a pair of *Hollanders* and trio of *Centurions* from the northeast. Use your artillery strikes to slow down the enemy.

Have all your 'Mechs stand somewhat north of the base. Be sure they're far enough away from the base that they can initiate combat with the enemy well before the bad guys get within shooting range of your Base HQ. Meanwhile send a small, fast 'Mech to scout the area north of the base so that you can see the enemy approaching well ahead of time.

As the enemy 'Mechs approach you must do your best to destroy them quickly with artillery strikes and concentrated fire. (The *Hunchbacks* are slowest and thus most vulnerable to artillery.) At the very least, engage each enemy in combat so it doesn't attack your HQ. The *Hollander IIs* are your top priority, as they're reasonably fast and contain potent long-range Gauss Rifles. They're also very concerned with destroying your base, while other 'Mechs such as the *Hunchbacks* are more interested in combat. Take the *Hollander IIs* down quickly, therefore, or they'll make short work of your HQ.

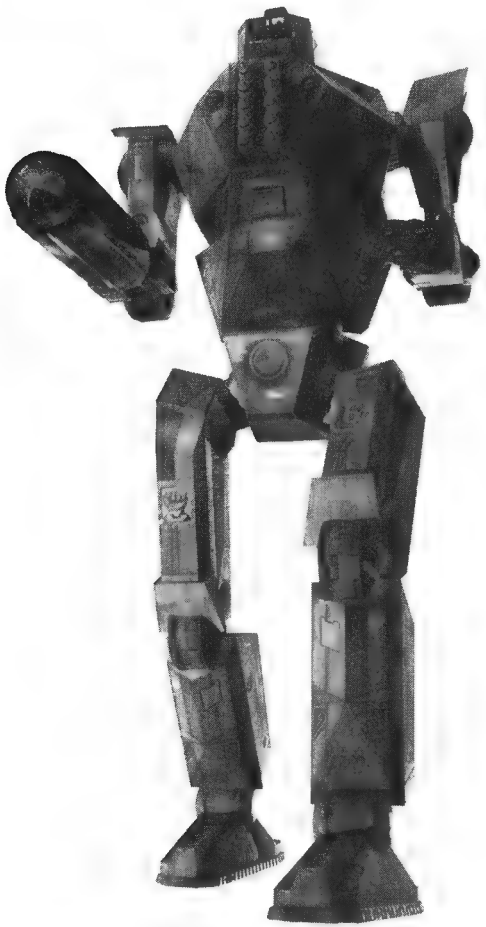
TIP *If you manage to destroy all but one of the enemy, try to disable the last one by targeting its legs. Then, if you succeed in shooting a leg off and the enemy no longer presents a threat to your base, send a few 'Mechs north to the spot labeled* "Hollanders, Centurions, *Container Stacks" on your Battle Map. Capture the structures you find there for extra salvage—but beware the* Bulldogs *you'll encounter along the way.*

That's the essence of the mission. The toughest part is destroying 'Mechs efficiently so they can't demolish your HQ. If you fail, try again and this time try to meet the enemy farther north, well away from the base.

TIP *If you want to approach the mission in a different way, try this.*

At the mission's start, immediately send your 'Mechs north to the middle of the map, where a trio of Bulldogs *guard two bridges. Destroy the* Bulldogs *with concentrated fire, then destroy the bridges as well. Now return to the base, clean out the defenders, and take it over.*

Now, when you capture the HQ Building, you'll have to watch out for the Commandos *and* J. Edgars *coming up from the south. This forces you to scramble your forces a bit more in order to cover all sides of the base. However, there's a major benefit to this strategy: The* Centurions *approaching from the north can't jump, so they can't cross the bridges you destroyed. Thus, you don't need to deal with them to win the mission.*



CHAPTER 8

OPERATION 3: VANGUARD

Now begins Operation Vanguard, the boldest set of missions to date. Yankee Company has been severely damaged and is in the process of repairs, and so it's up to Zulu Company—*your* company—to strike boldly into Clan territory and liberate the pivotal city of Affendale. The Clan will no doubt be surprised by the decisiveness of the strike, but that's not to say that they'll roll over easily. Far from it; expect a tough fight.

MISSION 3-1: ESCORT MEDICAL CONVOY

Medical supplies are urgently needed at Field Hospital Delta. A convoy of ambulances has been loaded with the necessary supplies, but their path is exceptionally dangerous—it involves following a paved road in Jaguar territory.

The ambulances have orders not to stop regardless of any dangers on their route. Your mission is to ensure that at least two ambulances make it to the hospital.

- Escort at least two ambulances to the hospital.
- Escort five ambulances to the hospital (secondary).

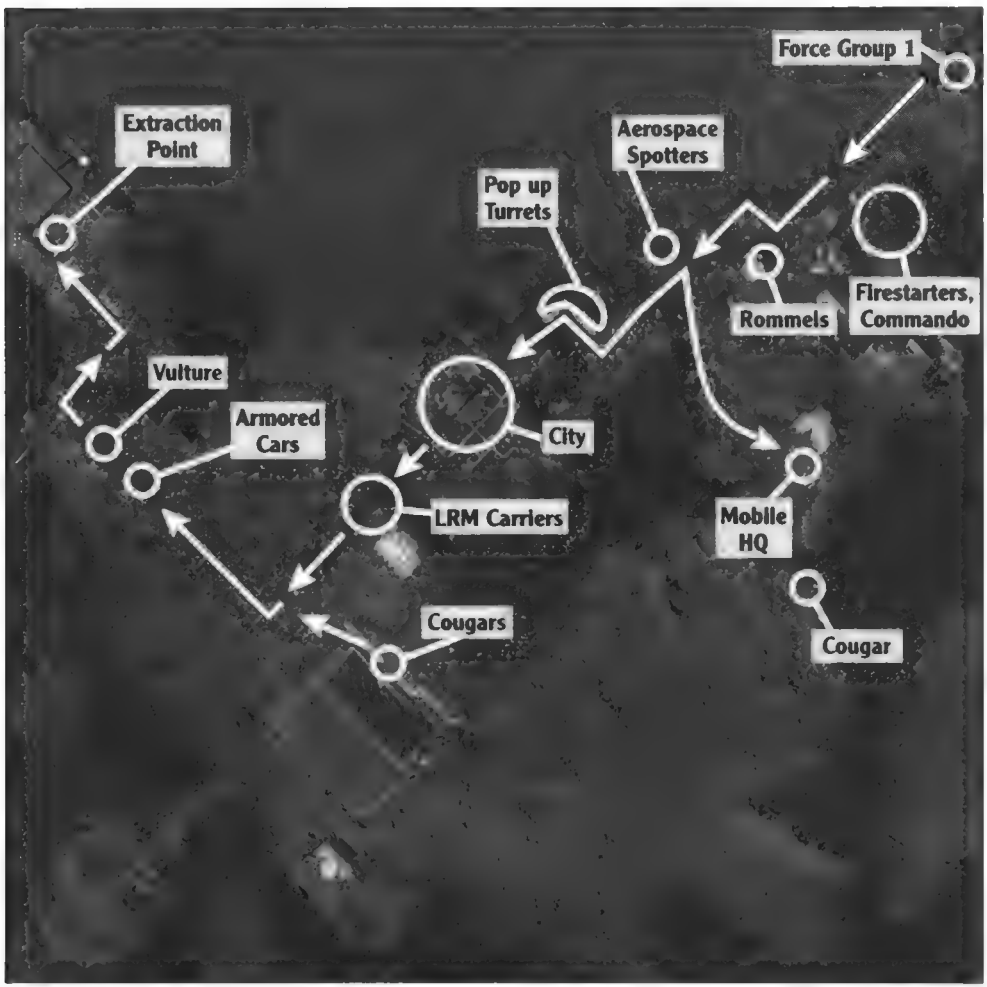


Fig. 8-1. Battle Map of Mission 3-1.

Overview

Your 'Mechs all start out very close to the ambulances. The ambulances themselves follow the paved road shown on the Battle Map. Your 'Mechs must stay slightly ahead of them at most times in order to clear the way.

A number of attackers coming from both front and back will do their best to sabotage the ambulances during the later stages of the mission. The walkthrough presented under Strategy Blueprint offers tactics to deal with these two-front attacks, but executing these tactics requires good timing.

Make no mistake, this is a very difficult mission. You may need to attempt it more than once to learn the exact timing of the enemies' approaches.

Recommended Forces

You're allocated 150 tons for this mission, and you'll need it all. Since timing is important in this mission, you'll want 'Mechs that can move fairly quickly. *Cougars* and *Ullers* are a good choice. They're fast, yet they can carry an impressive arsenal.

If you send one or two slower but more powerful 'Mechs, such as *Hunchbacks,* you can still finish the mission, though the slower 'Mechs tend to lag behind at the times when you need them most. Stick with the little 'Mechs and load them up with the best available weapons. Be sure to have a number of short-range weapons, though mid-range and long-range weapons are fine as well.

You have four small artillery strikes and a Camera Drone for this mission.

Strategy Blueprint

Your 'Mechs and the ambulances start in the northeast corner of the map. Group all your 'Mechs together immediately and head down the road without waiting for the ambulances. The first enemy units you'll encounter are two *Firestarter-Js* and one *Commando-J.* Using concentrated firepower, you should be able to destroy them quickly and without much trouble.

Once you have dealt with the jump 'Mechs, continue down the road. Soon you'll come upon two *Rommels.* Again, these are not a problem and your 'Mech Group can destroy them easily.

When the *Rommels* are gone, continue following the road. On the north side of the road are two Aerospace Spotters. Destroy them as quickly as possible. Keep your 'Mechs moving while you attack, as the Aerospace Spotters will waste no time calling in air strikes.

At this point in the mission, it's most efficient to split up your forces.

Break off your fastest 'Mech and send it southeast toward the Mobile HQ shown on the Battle Map. Have it chase down the Mobile HQ (seen in Figure 8-2) and capture it as quickly as possible, then return to the main group. Allow the main group to continue down the road instead of waiting for this 'Mech; it can catch up eventually.

Once the Mobile HQ is captured, you'll be able to see a small group of 'Mechs waiting in ambush farther down the road. It consists of a pair of *Ullers;* their position is shown on the Battle Map. Immediately use all four of your small artillery strikes on them.

Fig. 8-2. Capture the Mobile HQ quickly, before it can go too far south.

TIP *The artillery strikes will damage the* Ullers *and soften them up. They also alert the* Ullers *to your presence and cause them to attack earlier than they otherwise would. This is good, because if you don't use artillery strikes they attack much later while you're fighting a* Vulture*—and if they attack then, they're too much to handle.*

Have your 'Mechs continue down the road and deal with the Pop-Up Turrets noted on your Battle Map. There are three of them; destroy each of them in turn, staying out of range of the others until you are ready to deal with them.

Have the 'Mechs continue down the road into the City area marked on the Battle Map. In the City area, there's a row of barrels set up across the roadway as shown on the Battle Map. Destroy it and begin firing at the trees that flank the road nearby.

Swarms of Elementals are hiding in the trees near the City, and you can see them if you look closely. Keep firing at different parts of the trees until you activate them, then destroy them when they rush out.

Now send your 'Mechs down the road once again. Two LRM Carriers are parked on either side of the road (see the Battle Map); destroy them as quickly as possible.

Any *Ullers* from the group on which you previously used your artillery strikes will probably choose this time to attack. Run down to meet them and finish them off

as quickly as possible. Then send all but your smallest 'Mech back north toward the ambulances, because a *Cougar* will try to sneak in from behind and destroy your ambulances from the rear.

TIP *You may experience slight differences in the timing of the* Uller *attacks, depending on exactly where the ambulances are and where your 'Mechs are. We can't anticipate every possibility, so just remember this: The* Ullers *you struck with your artillery earlier will attack from the south somewhere around this time, and a lone* Uller *will try to attack the convoy from behind shortly thereafter. Your job is to take out the southern* Ullers *first, then go take out the sneak attacker.*

Have your larger 'Mechs destroy the lone sneak-attacking *Cougar* while your smallest 'Mech stays with the convoy. Then have your large 'Mechs rejoin the convoy as quickly as possible after they've dispatched the *Cougar.*

If you haven't destroyed the LRM Carriers noted on the Battle Map, head down the road until you find them and take them out now. If you already did, just continue down the road.

The next enemy units you come across are two Armored Cars. Of course these pose no threat to your 'Mechs, and you can destroy them easily. The only trick is making sure your 'Mechs get there before the ambulances do, which is easy if you took out the *Ullers* efficiently.

The next and final enemy unit you come upon is a *Vulture-A.* If your 'Mechs are in reasonably good shape, you'll be able to take out the *Vulture* without losing any 'Mechs. Remember that you can kill a *Vulture* very swiftly by crowding up so close to it that it can't fire its LRMs at your 'Mechs. (The LRMs have a minimum range, inside which they can't target anything.)

You may not have killed the *Vulture* by the time the ambulances get close to it, but if you're harassing it with your 'Mechs, it won't bother to target the ambulances.

Once the *Vulture* has been destroyed, there are no more obstacles for the ambulances. Wait for them to reach the Extraction Point shown on the Battle Map, and you've completed the mission.

TIP *Remember, timing is everything in this mission. If you fail, try to move faster next time and keep a better lookout for sensor contacts. You have a Camera Drone at your disposal; use it if you think it'll help.*

MISSION 3-2: DESTROY ENEMY COMMAND UNIT

Bondsman Major Piotrev's Command Unit is heading toward a Repair Base in the Jaguars' rear area after a particularly tough battle. Your task is to preemptively take over the Repair Base and greet the Major when he arrives.

Also, you are to destroy two Industrial Complexes located inside the base that are fabricating spare parts.

Before taking over the Repair Base, you should cut off the primary power to the base's Turrets. The power source is a geothermal power plant located east of the base itself.

- Destroy two Industrial Complexes.
- Destroy Major's Unit.
- Destroy primary Turret power.

Overview

You have two main objectives in this mission: take over the Repair Base and defeat the Major's Command Unit. Fortunately, the base has 'Mech Repair Bays. These buildings allow you to repair any damaged BattleMechs before facing the Command Unit. If you're careful, the mission will be easy to complete.

The Command Unit approaches the Repair Base after approximately 10 minutes. You should have more time than you need to prepare for its arrival.

Recommended Forces

You have a drop limit of 300 tons and eight 'Mechs. You want to use as much tonnage as possible, as this is a tough mission. We recommend heavy, ammo-intensive weapons.

Though most of your 'Mechs should be large, we recommend that you bring along one very small, light 'Mech as well. An *Uller* is ideal.

You have one small artillery strike and one Camera Drone for this mission.

Strategy Blueprint

From the drop point indicated on the Battle Map, send all your 'Mechs southwest along the indicated path. The first units you'll encounter are a pair of *Strikers,* an Aerospace Spotter, and a Mobile HQ Vehicle (noted as "Assorted Vehicles" on the Battle Map).

The first order of business is to destroy the Aerospace Spotter and eliminate the threat of air strikes. The Mobile HQ Vehicle takes off to the south the minute your

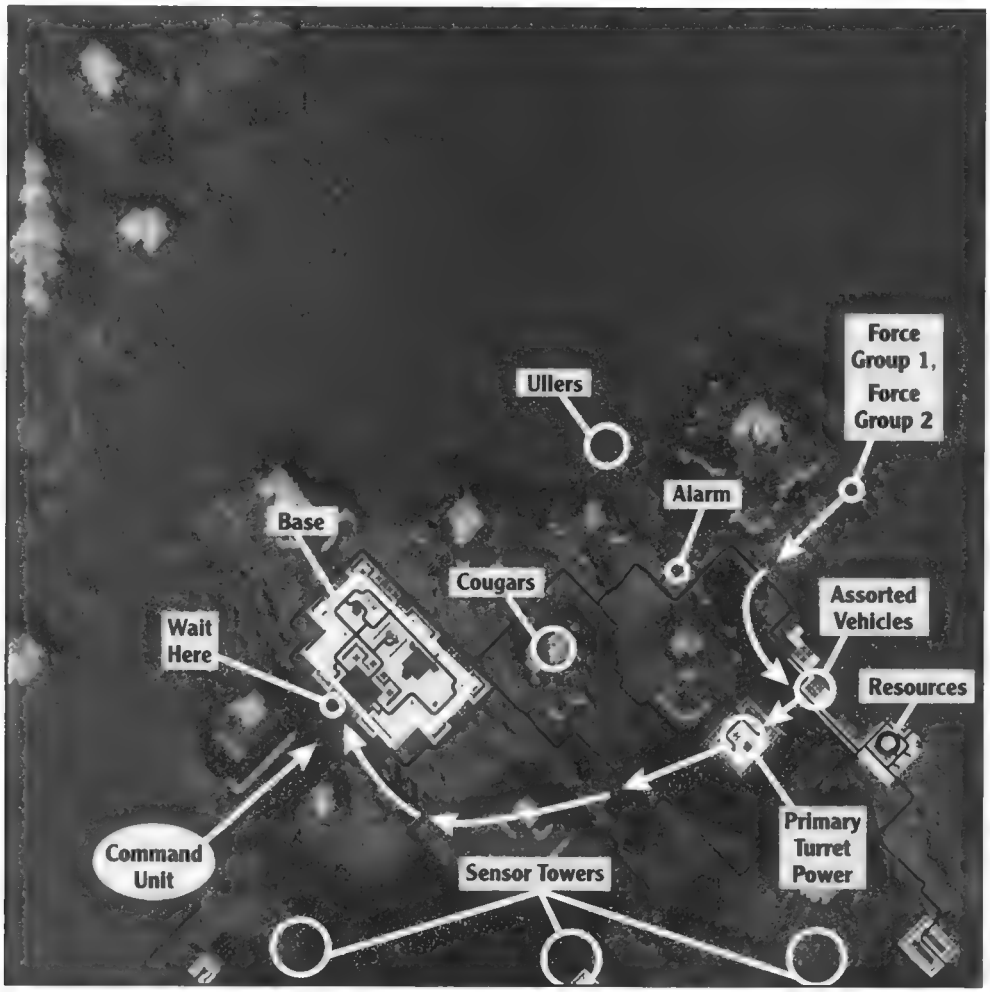
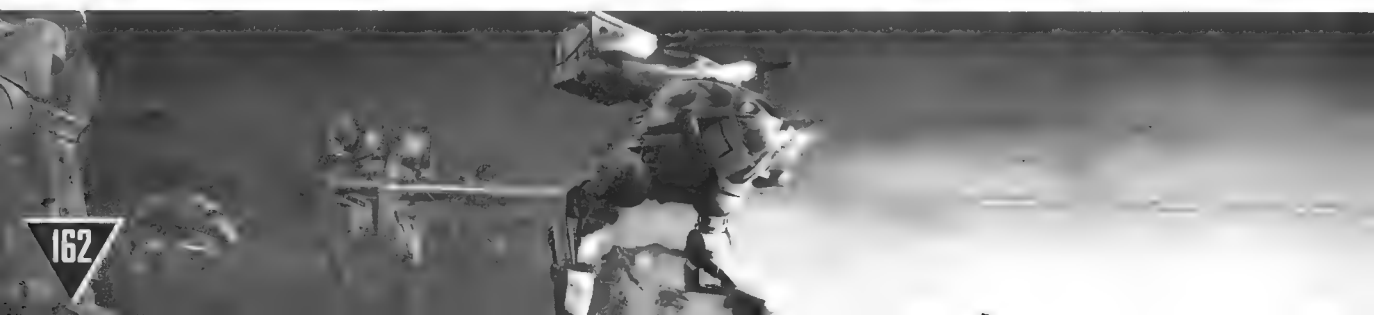


Fig. 8-3. Battle Map of Mission 3-2.

'Mechs open fire; assign your smallest, fastest 'Mech to hunt it down and capture it while the other 'Mechs fight. When you capture it, the Repair Base will become visible on your map.



Next, head southwest toward the spot marked "Primary Turret Power" on the Battle Map. You'll have to destroy several Pop-Up Turrets guarding the borders of the base. Do *not* destroy the primary Turret Power Generator yet! Instead, leave your smallest 'Mech behind, right next to the Generator.

TIP *You shouldn't blow up the Generator now, because the Turrets it powers only go off-line for a minute or so when it's destroyed. After a minute, an auxiliary power source located inside the Repair Base kicks in, and the Turrets become fully functional again. Therefore, you don't want to destroy the Primary Turret Power until your BattleMechs are in striking position, where they can capitalize on the temporary loss of power.*

Send the remainder of your BattleMechs toward the Repair Base, staying out of range of the *Cougars* as shown on the Battle Map.

Once all of your units have reached the spot labeled "Wait Here" on the Battle Map, use the 'Mech you left behind to destroy the primary Turret Power Generator. Send your remaining 'Mechs into the base as soon as the Generator is destroyed. Have them target enemy 'Mechs and vehicles but not Turrets.

Several Clan units are waiting for you inside the base, including two *Ullers,* five *Condors,* a *Saracen,* and an SRM Carrier. If you didn't capture the Mobile HQ Vehicle before, it'll be in the base now as well.

The base's Turrets will be off-line only for a short time. To create an advantageous battleground for your units, take over the nearest Turret Control Tower as quickly as possible, then have your 'Mechs huddle near the Turrets that Tower controls. Unless you are ruthlessly efficient, the Turrets will come on-line before you have taken out all of the enemy units in the base—so your 'Mechs should stay near the Turrets they've captured and avoid the ones they haven't.

Once all mobile enemy units are destroyed, run your 'Mechs around the base and capture all remaining Turret Control Towers. Try not to destroy the Turrets you haven't yet captured; they'll help you out once the Command Unit arrives.

TIP *You can also have your light 'Mech run into the base at this time. Make sure that it avoids the* Cougars *marked on your Battle Map.*

When all Turret Control Towers are in your possession, capture the two 'Mech Repair Bays and the Container Stack located inside the base. Start repairing your 'Mechs. Remember that the Repair Bays replenish ammo as well as armor, so even 'Mechs with little apparent damage should repair themselves.

The next step is to wait for the Major's Unit to arrive. Gather your 'Mechs near the middle of the base. The Major's Command Unit approaches from the southwest and enters the base through the south entrance.

TIP *If you want to do a little preemptive damage, send your fastest 'Mech (with sensors) through the southern entrance until it picks up the approaching 'Mechs with its sensors. Have your 'Mech return to the base when sensor contact is made. Then, when the Command Unit comes into visible range, drop your lone artillery strike in its path.*

Fig. 8-4. The southern edge of the base has the most Missile Turrets, so that's where you should try to fight the Command Unit.

The Major's Unit consists of one *Awesome-A* (moderately damaged) and four *Jagermechs* (two jump-capable, one Weapons variant, and one Armor variant). Ideally, you should engage the enemy only after the Missile Turrets have fired a salvo at them. Then, before they can destroy any Turret Control Towers, attack.

While you engage the enemy 'Mechs in battle, try to keep your units near the southern edge of the base. That's where you have the highest concentration of Missile Turrets to contribute to your cause (see Figure 8-4).

Once the enemy 'Mechs are destroyed, you can demolish the two Industrial Complexes located inside the base and you'll win the mission.

TIP *If you want to save on repair bills for the next mission, send your BattleMechs into the Repair Bays* after *fighting the Command Unit but* before *destroying the Industrial Complexes.*

MISSION 3-3: CAPTURE ENEMY CONVOY

The Clan is moving seven supply trucks loaded with valuable cargo through the Kenuk river region near Affendale.

Your job is to capture as many of those supply trucks as possible, thus making your attack on Affendale easier. You need to capture a minimum of four trucks, but you'll be generously rewarded if you manage to capture all seven.

- Capture four supply trucks.
- Capture all supply trucks for extra Resource Points.

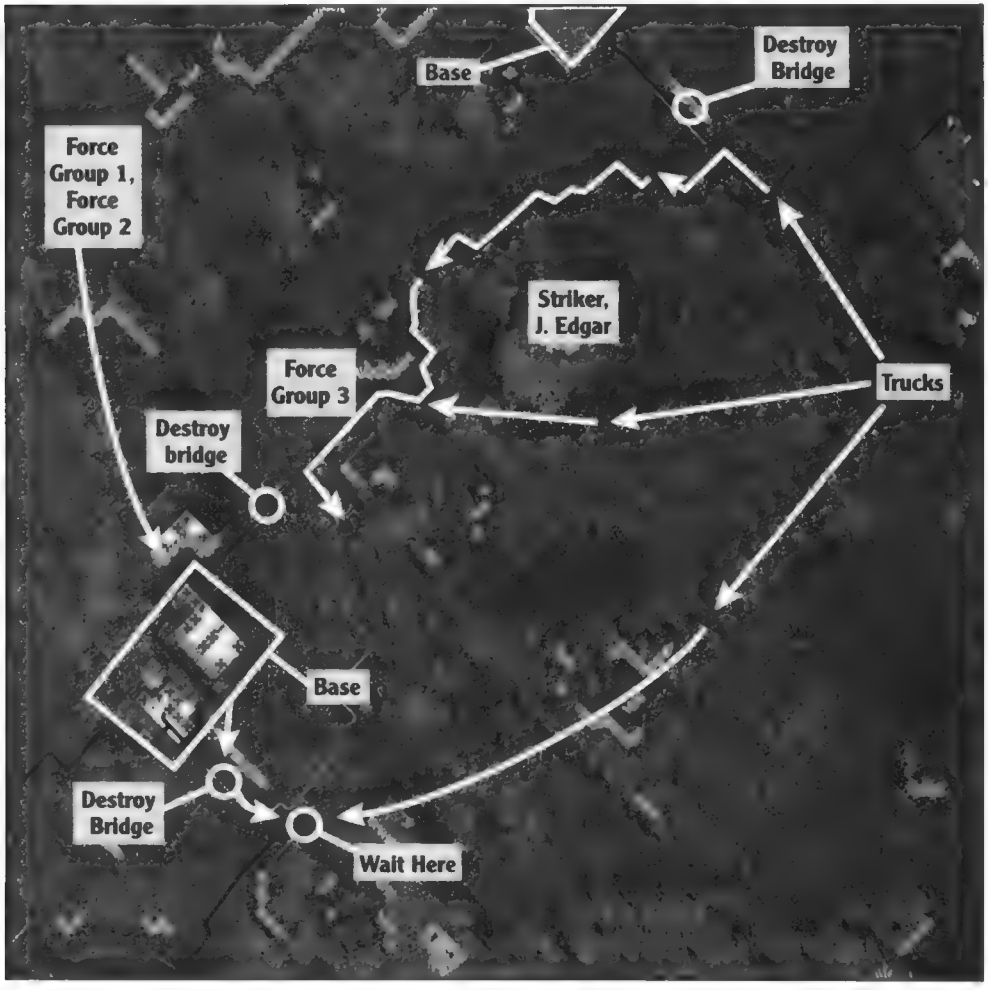


Fig. 8-5. Battle Map of Mission 3-3.

Overview

In this mission, there are seven supply trucks to capture. They start out as one large group on the eastern edge of the map, but quickly split into three separate groups. This makes them difficult to catch.

There are three paths that the trucks can follow to escape. These routes include the road that disappears off the northern edge of the map, the road that disappears off the western edge of the map, and the road that disappears off the southern edge of the map. Fortunately for you, both the northern and western exits require the supply trucks to cross bridges. Your goal, therefore, is to destroy all bridges on the map, thus forcing the trucks toward the southern exit, where your 'Mechs can simply wait for their arrival.

Recommended Forces

You're allocated 300 tons for this mission. We recommend that you take a mix of heavy and medium 'Mechs to drop in Force Groups 1 and 2, and a light, fast 'Mech to place in Force Group 3. Make sure you place the fast 'Mech in Group 3!

Energy weapons, such as Large Lasers and PPCs, are desirable for this mission. These weapons have the punch required to quickly dispatch the escorts guarding the supply trucks, yet won't run out of ammunition at critical junctures.

You have two small artillery strikes and two Sensor Probes for this mission.

Strategy Blueprint

Force Groups 1 and 2 are dropped next to one another, while Force Group 3 is dropped on the other side of the river. As mentioned previously under Recommended Forces, you should have deployed your fastest 'Mech in Force Group 3 and all the rest in Force Groups 1 and 2.

Send the Force Group 3 'Mech northeast along the nearby road, ignoring the *Striker* and *J. Edgar* parked on a nearby hill. This 'Mech's task is to reach the map's northernmost spot labeled "Destroy Bridge" on the Battle Map. It needs to hurry.

Meanwhile, move the rest of your 'Mechs south, following the path indicated on the Battle Map. Once those 'Mechs are in motion, you should concentrate on making sure that Force Group 3 reaches the northern bridge.

Once the Force Group 3 'Mech has sighted the northern bridge, send it back to its original drop point and from there have it rejoin the other 'Mechs, continuing to ignore the *Striker* and *J. Edgar.*

Drop both of your small artillery strikes on the bridge your light 'Mech just exposed, destroying it.

While your scout 'Mech is returning from its mission, continue to advance the rest of your forces south until you reach the spot marked "Base".

There is one Turret Control Tower in this base, controlling a number of damaging Cannon Turrets. Destroying the Control Tower will disable the Turrets much more efficiently than destroying each Turret in turn. There are also a number of Laser Turrets with no apparent control. These will have to be destroyed individually.

There are also two *Rommels* located in the southern part of the base. Destroy them as well. After the Turrets are off-line and the *Rommels* are destroyed, capture the Component Warehouse located in the base itself.

Fig. 8-6. Destroying the Turret Control Tower is the most efficient way of disabling these particular Turrets.

By this time your scout 'Mech should have returned from its mission. If either the *Striker* or the *J. Edgar* are still giving it chase, have your main 'Mech force destroy them. Then destroy the map's central bridge with concentrated weapons fire.

Group all of your 'Mechs together in one huge Force Group. At this point there should be only one bridge left on the map—the southern one. Have all your 'Mechs cross the southern bridge.

Once all your 'Mechs have safely crossed the bridge, destroy it. Now the only escape route for the Trucks is the road leading south.

Gather your 'Mechs at the spot labeled "Wait Here" on the Battle Map, then use Sensor Probes to locate the nearest group of supply trucks. Feel free to move out to intercept them, but don't get so far out of position that subsequent groups can sneak past your forces.

This first convoy group contains an SRM carrier, a *Rommel,* a *Hunchback IIc,* and three supply trucks. Destroy all the defending units and then capture the two supply trucks.

Soon the second convoy group will arrive. (You'll see them well in advance because your Force Group 3 'Mech already explored the area they're coming from.) This second group contains a *Cougar,* a *Rommel,* a *Striker,* and two supply trucks. Again, take out all of the defending units and then capture the Trucks.

When the second group has been dealt with, look for the third group. This group consists of two *Cougars,* a *Rommel,* and three supply trucks. Once you have taken care of this group, you win the mission.

Mission 3-4: Liberate Reeducation Camp

Your mission is to rescue loyal Inner Sphere warriors from a "Reeducation Camp" in the Mayan Canyons. This will be complicated somewhat by the mazelike quality of the canyons.

Even as you try to capture the Reeducation Camp's HQ Building you'll need to guard your Field Base from enemy patrols. This will require you to divide your forces, which may cause difficulties despite the large drop weight allotted for this mission.

- Capture Reeducation Camp HQ Building.
- Defend Field Base HQ Building.

Overview

In this mission, you must defend your own base and capture the enemy base. This means you'll need to divide your forces into two groups. Fortunately, you have more than enough drop weight allotted to get the job done.

You have 12 minutes to get to the enemy base and take over the headquarters. You should have no trouble reaching the base in time if you proceed at a reasonable pace.

There are several routes you can take to reach the enemy base, and your forces are strong enough to brave any of them. However, the northernmost path is the simplest and gets you to the enemy base with plenty of time to spare. This is the path recommended in the Strategy Blueprint.

If you take long enough to capture the enemy base, many of the enemy units shown on the Battle Map will mobilize and gradually make their way toward your Field

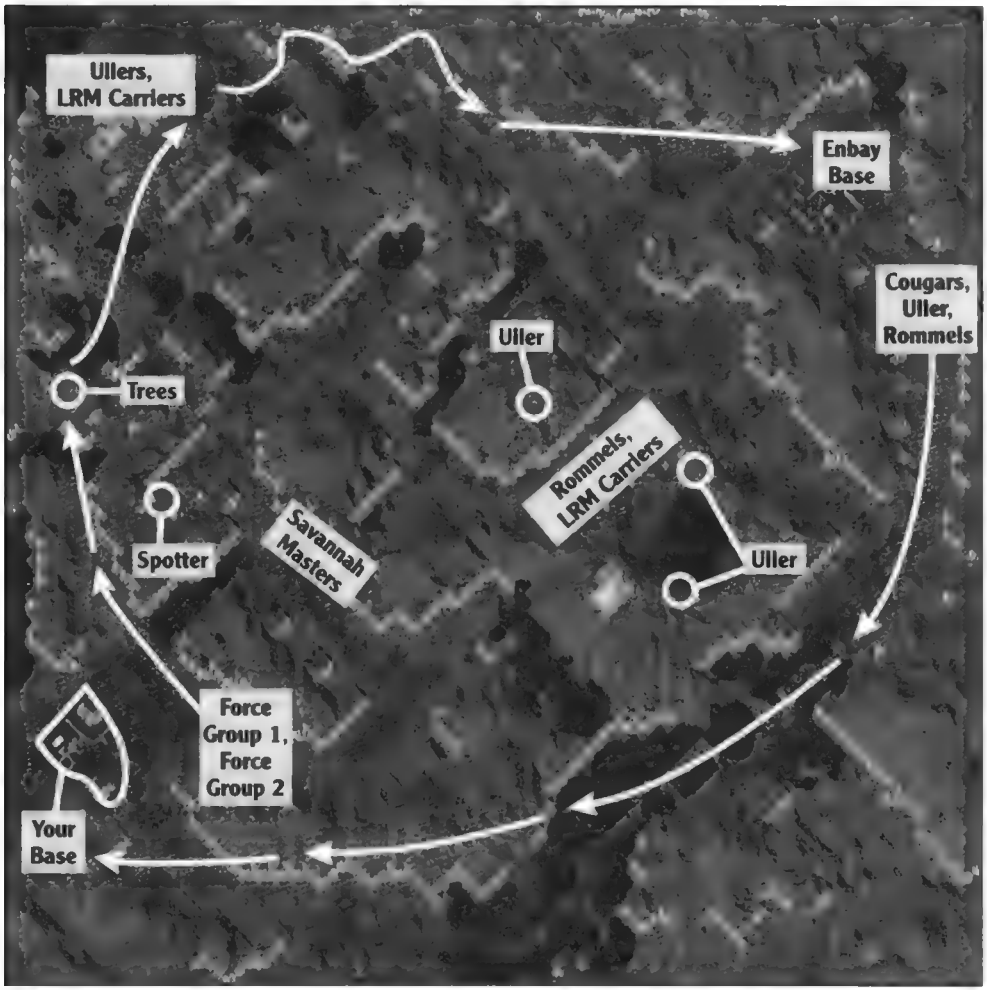


Fig. 8-7. Battle Map of Mission 3-4.

Base HQ Building. As long as you proceed at a reasonable pace, though, you'll complete the mission before most of these units decide to attack.

Recommended Forces

You are allowed 425 tons in this mission, but only eight 'Mechs. We recommend that you take two heavy, slow 'Mechs to guard your base and six relatively fast 'Mechs to go after the enemy base. Blazing speed isn't crucial, but moderate speed is useful.

You have one small and one large artillery strike on this mission, plus one Sensor Probe.

Strategy Blueprint

Your units begin the mission just outside your Field Base in the southwest corner of the Battle Map. Divide your forces into two groups: Two large, sluggish 'Mechs that will stay behind to guard the base, and a number of faster 'Mechs that will assault the enemy Base HQ.

Send the two big defending 'Mechs into the Field Base itself. Then group the remaining fast 'Mechs together and send them north along the path illustrated on the Battle Map.

As you head north, you'll need to burn down a row of trees blocking your path. Once the trees are gone, continue north to the top of a hill. Here you're likely to meet three jump-capable *Ullers* and two LRM Carriers. At some point, these enemy units will be in motion and, depending on how quickly your forces arrived at the hilltop, none, some, or all of the aforementioned units will be waiting there for you.

Keep an eye out for these units if you don't find them on the hilltop. If you don't destroy them, they'll eventually head toward your base, where your two defenders will need to deal with them.

Once the *Ullers* and LRM carriers have been destroyed, head east along the path drawn on the Battle Map. You won't encounter any more enemy units until you reach the enemy base.

About this time, two *Cougars* and two *Ullers* approach your Field Base from the east; their path is drawn on the Battle Map. Your pair of defending 'Mechs should intercept them before they can do much damage to your HQ Building. (If you take too long to capture the enemy Base HQ, a pair of *Rommels* also will attack along this path.)

Your base has a few Turrets for defense, so wait for the enemy to get within Turret range before advancing your defenders to fight them. The four enemy 'Mechs tend to stand in a tight cluster and fire at your forces; this is the perfect opportunity to use an artillery strike or two to soften them up.

TIP *Neither the forces at the enemy base nor the forces attacking your base are overwhelmingly tough, but both require your attention. Therefore, you don't want to be fighting them both at the same time. It may be beneficial to wait to attack the enemy base until the coast is reasonably clear near your own base.*

When the 'Mechs attacking your base have been taken care of, it's time to attack the enemy base.

Several Turrets surround and stand inside the enemy base. You can disable them by destroying the Turret Control Tower located at the base's southern end. Several enemy units are also present, including three *Bulldogs,* two *Rommels,* a *Cougar,* and two *Ullers.* Although this sounds like a lot to deal with, the enemy units are somewhat spread out. You'll be able to destroy some of them before the others come into range.

As always, use concentrated fire to destroy the nearest enemy and then move on to the next. Once all enemy units are destroyed, capture the Component Warehouse for salvage. Then capture the HQ Building to win.

MISSION 3-5: DEFEND ALLIED SUPPLY BASE

A Clan force is marching on a pivotal supply base near the embattled city of Affendale. The defense force already stationed there is minimal, and your unit is the closest one in the area. Thus, you're tasked with defending the base from the Clan onslaught.

Your primary goal is to defend the Base HQ, but secondary structures such as the Sensor Control Building and Turret Power Generators are vital to the base's defense. Don't let them fall.

Two 'Mech Repair Bays are available for your use during this mission.

- Protect Base HQ Building.
- Protect Sensor Control Building.
- Protect northern Turret Power Generator.
- Protect southern Turret Power Generator.

Overview

When you notice that you've got 480 tons of drop weight allocated for this mission, you have a clue that it's going to be a massive slugfest. Add in the fact that you've got Repair Bays and you just *know* it's gonna be a big one.

The essence of this mission is to get your 'Mechs into the Supply Base as quickly as possible and have them defend it against multiple waves of attackers. This is simple in theory but tough in practice, especially considering the sheer number of *Hunchbacks* possessed by the enemy.

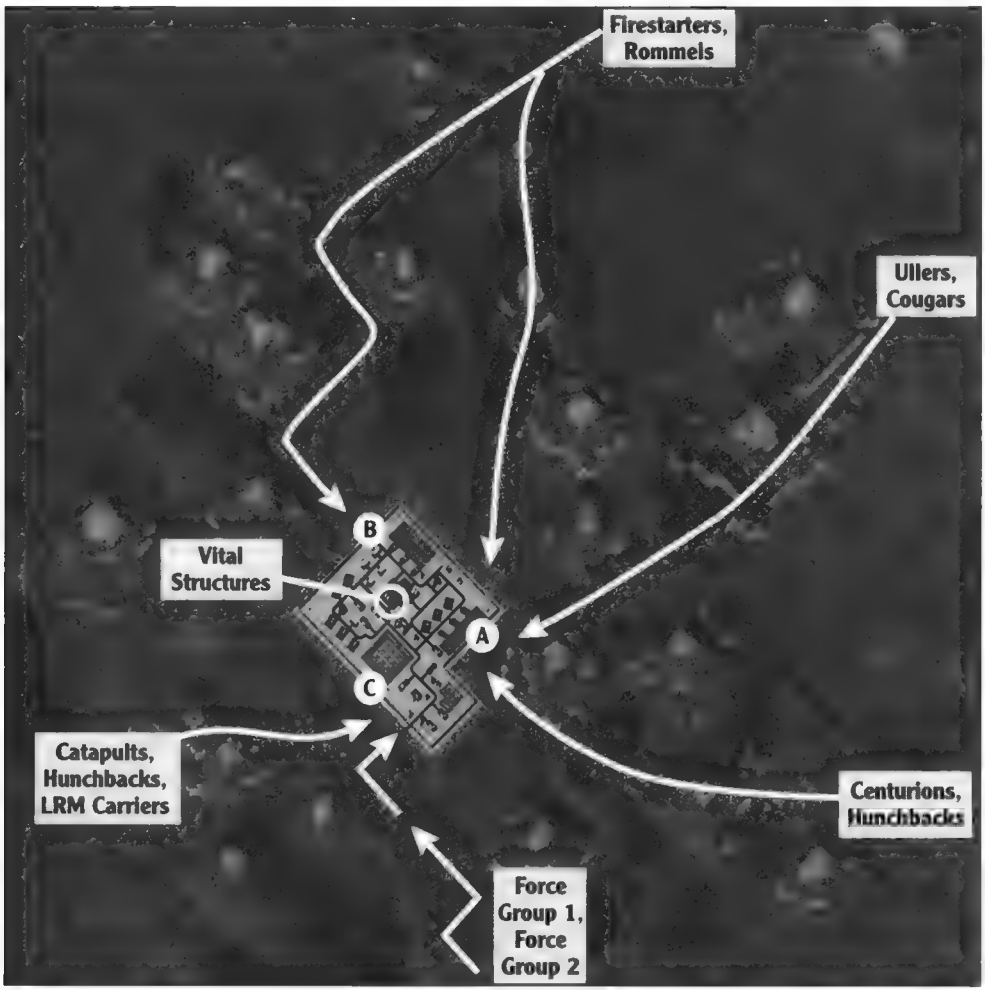


Fig. 8-8. Battle Map of Mission 3-5.

Despite the ponderous amount of tonnage involved in this mission, finesse is definitely required. You'll need to learn how to manage two battles at once, and make the most of the brief respite time between enemy waves. Your ability to handle these tasks will determine your success in the mission.

Recommended Forces

You've got 480 tons but only eight slots in the DropShip. That means you're going to take your biggest 'Mechs—if your biggest 'Mechs don't even approach the weight limit, you might need to buy a new one. We recommend buying an *Awesome,* which has great power but isn't quite as slow as the *Atlas.*

Bring along your biggest 'Mechs with the heaviest hitting weapons you can muster. Don't be afraid to use a few Autocannons, Heavy Autocannons, or Gauss Rifles—it's all good. You'll have access to Repair Bays, so those weapons' meager ammunition supplies can be restocked midway through the mission.

You have four small artillery strikes and one Sensor Probe for this mission.

You are also placed in command of a Minelayer and two *Pegasus* Scout Tanks that begin within the walls of the base you must defend. The Minelayer, if used properly, could be one of your most effective units. The two scout tanks can either be used for scouting, or to harass the enemy.

Strategy Blueprint

Your Force Groups are dropped at the south central part of the map. Immediately select all your 'Mechs, and start marching them up the road toward the base. Get them inside the base quickly.

Once they are moving, send the Minelayer out the northwest gate along the road, all the way out to where the road bends. Have it lay mines back into the base all the way to the intersection near the Sensor Control Building. Order the scout tanks to Guard the Minelayer just in case. If time permits, start mining the area in front of the objectives you must protect, the HQ Building, the generators, and the Sensor Control Building.

Your 'Mechs are now inside the base. Run them up to the northern edge of the base, where they need to intercept and destroy a quartet of jump-capable *Firestarters* that attack the base's northern edge. If you fail to destroy them quickly they'll take out one of your crucial 'Mech Repair Bays (see Figure 8-9).

Fig. 8-9. Don't panic if this one gets destroyed, there is another in the far corner of the base.

Now that the *Firestarters* are gone, quickly examine your 'Mechs. They're already

in two groups, but you need to tweak those groups a little. Instead of two groups of four 'Mechs, you want to have one group of five and one of three. Make sure both groups include at least one really big 'Mech. We'll call the big group Group A and the little one Group B.

Now position Group A inside the eastern edge of the base walls, at the spot marked "A" on the Battle Map. Meanwhile position Group B at the spot marked "B" on the Battle Map, near the base's northwest corner. If you are comfortable with the amount of mining along that northwestern road and into the base you can leave a minimal force here to take care of any straggler tanks that are not destroyed by the mines.

Shortly, a massive attack will punish the walls near Point A. It consists of several *Ullers* and *Cougars,* plus a brutally large group of *Centurions* and *Hunchbacks.* These 'Mechs will approach the wall and try to blast a hole in it. This is a prime opportunity to use artillery to soften them up some. Then, use concentrated fire to take down 'Mech after 'Mech as they mill around outside, then systematically take out the 'Mechs that break through the wall. It'll be chaotic and brutal, but if you concentrate your fire on one target at a time and move severely damaged 'Mechs to the rear, you'll probably manage to survive.

Complicating matters, at the same time the Point A attack is going on, a squad of six *Rommels* will attack Point B. You need to quickly flip back and forth between the Point A and Point B battles, reassigning targets to Groups A and B as necessary.

If all goes well, you'll foil the attacks on both fronts without losing any 'Mechs. When all enemies are gone, immediately have Group A enter the northern Repair Bay and repair themselves. Simultaneously have Group B repair themselves in the southern Repair Bay.

As 'Mechs are repaired, send them down to the southern edge of the base, which is marked "C" on your Battle Map. Form all the 'Mechs into one huge group.

Eventually a mixed group, including a couple of *Catapults,* several *Hunchbacks,* and several LRM Carriers will appear from the southwest and trickle their way up toward Point C. Let them have everything you've got as they break through the walls. As usual, concentrate on one target at a time—and stay inside the base so your Turrets can do their work. This is another tough battle, but with luck (and enough heavy 'Mechs) you'll survive.

The mission ends when this wave of attackers is destroyed.

TIP *The directions for this mission are simple because it's so combat-intensive. If you fail the first time, try again and attempt to manage your battles a little better. Or else go back to the drawing board and try different weapon payloads, perhaps specializing in one particular range so you can move all your 'Mechs to that range for maximum effect.*

MISSION 3-6: LIBERATE AFFENDALE

Your mission is to destroy the Clan Administration Building in the foothills of Mount Samurai near Affendale.

Intelligence reports indicate that the capture of the Clan's Sensor Grid will be invaluable in completing this task. The Sensor Control Building is located within a double-walled facility in the middle of Affendale. Power Generators powering the Turrets around the Sensor Control Building are located to the southeast.

This mission represents the culmination of Operation Vanguard. Don't expect a cakewalk.

- Destroy Clan Administration Building.
- Capture enemy Sensor Control.
- Ascend Mount Samurai for extraction.

Overview

There are essentially two parts to this mission: Take over the Sensor Control Tower, then destroy the Administration Building and all units near the Extraction Point.

The first part is broken into two steps. Step one is to take out the southern Turret Power Generator, thus disabling all Turrets surrounding the Sensor Control Complex. Once the Turrets are disabled, the only defenses left are two *Catapults*. The second step, naturally, is to attack the complex and assume control.

There are several vital structures for you to capture in the Sensor Control Complex. The Sensor Control Tower allows detection of all enemy 'Mechs on the map, while the nearby headquarters reveals two bridges leading to the Clan Administration Building.

The second part of this mission involves getting to the Clan Administration Building itself. There are several possible paths to the Administration Building, none of which is vastly superior to the others. However, if the island is approached from the southeast, it's possible to destroy the northern Turret Power Generator and capture a few extra Resource Warehouses. Therefore, that's the path detailed in the Strategy Blueprint.

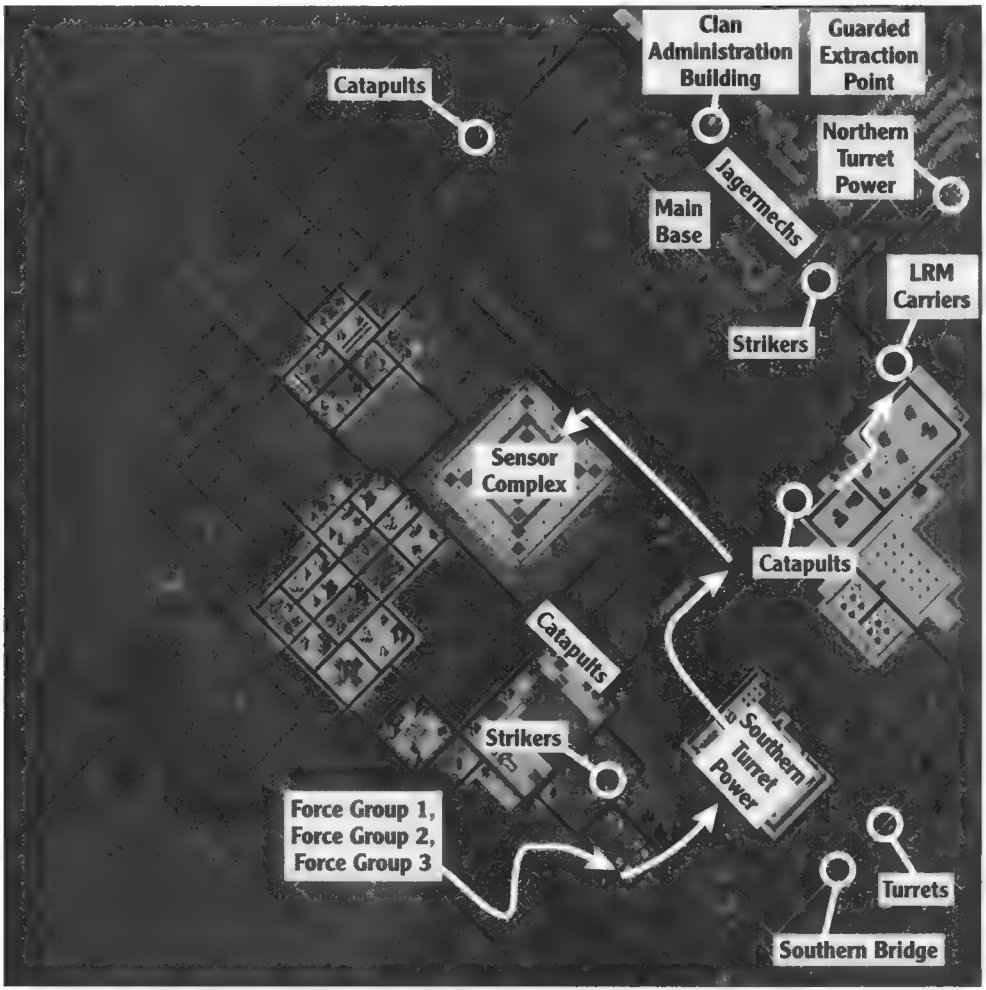
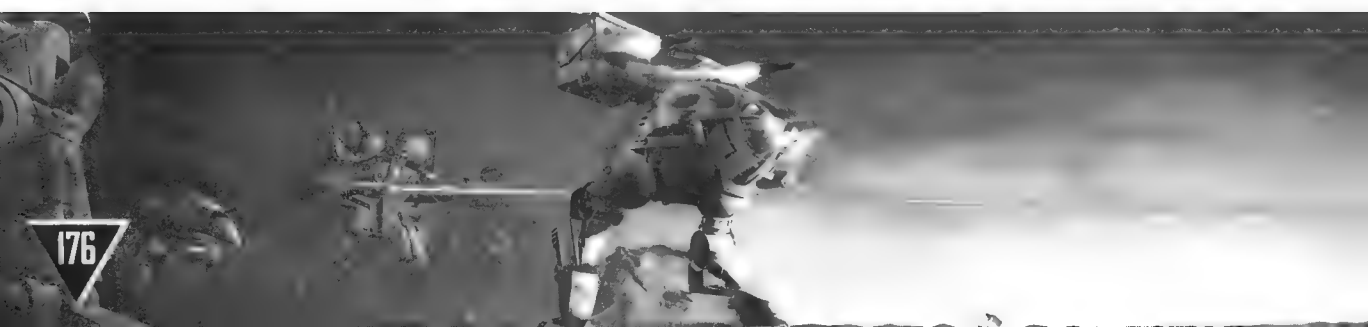


Fig. 8-10. Battle Map of Mission 3-6.



Recommended Forces

Your Drop Weight Limit is a massive 450 tons. Speed is a complete non-issue in this mission, so you'll probably want to take the biggest and most powerful 'Mechs available. Don't bother with a Refit Truck, because there are two fully functional 'Mech Repair Bays that you can capture early in the mission.

Lots of LRMs, PPCs, and ER-PPCs will prove most useful for this mission.

You have one small and one large artillery strike for this mission, plus one Camera Drone.

Strategy Blueprint

Group all your 'Mechs together into one massive Force Group, then send them east along the path shown on the Battle Map. The first units you'll encounter are a pair of *Strikers.* Destroy them. Next, you'll be welcomed by a pair of *Catapults* on patrol in the area. Again, they are not much of a problem for your forces if you concentrate fire.

Once the *Catapults* have been taken out, continue east toward the southern Turret Power Generator shown on the Battle Map. When you arrive, the four resident *Jagermechs* standing guard will come out to greet your forces. As long as all of your forces are together, you should be able to take out all four *Jagermechs* without losing any 'Mechs. Remember to rotate damaged units to the rear of the fight.

TIP *The* Jagermechs' *idea of good fighting technique involves lots of standing around. Feel free to use one or two small artillery strikes on them, but save two small ones and the two large ones for later.*

Once the *Jagermechs* are destroyed, enter the base and take out the Turret Power Generator. Then capture the Repair Bay located there and thoroughly fix up your 'Mechs. (Remember to restock your 'Mechs' ammo supplies even if they didn't take any damage.)

Now that you have taken out the power to the Turrets surrounding the Sensor Complex, it's time to go take over the vital Sensor Tower.

Send your 'Mechs northwest along the path shown on the Battle Map. When they near a bridge, one of the two *Catapults* patrolling on the other side will come across and fire at your forces. The other will hang back and start to blow up the bridge. Allow the bridge to be destroyed; you don't need it. Just concentrate on destroying those *Catapults* quickly and efficiently, while *staying on your side of the bridge.*

When the *Catapults* are gone, you can proceed toward the Sensor Complex.

Enter the Sensor Complex through the gate on the northeast side. Avoid destroying the gate if you can because it may come in handy later. Since you recently took out the Turret power, the only defenses the Sensor Complex has left are two

Catapults. Destroy both with concentrated fire, then start capturing buildings inside the complex.

Be sure to capture the Sensor Tower and the Headquarters Building. The Sensor Tower reveals the position of all enemy 'Mechs still left on the map, while the Headquarters Building reveals two bridges that lead to the Clan Administration Building. Also, if you didn't destroy the gate, be sure to capture the Gate Control. Next, capture the Repair Bay and start fixing up your 'Mechs as quickly as possible.

Fig. 8-11. Capturing this Headquarters Building lets you see all enemy 'Mechs' sensor contacts.

Taking over the Sensor Complex alerts the Jaguars to your presence and causes three of the six *Jagermechs* patrolling the Administration Building to march south and attack. You'll see them crossing the bridge to the north if you've already captured the Headquarters Building. (The remaining three *Jagermechs* continue to patrol the area in front of the Administration Building.)

By the time the *Jagermechs* arrive, you should have at least been able to repair your most damaged 'Mechs. Leave your forces inside the Sensor Complex and fight the *Jagermechs* from there: If the gate is still intact, the *Jagermechs* won't be able to shoot at you over the wall as they have no missile weapons. This buys you time as you blast them with your own missile weapons. Even if the gate is destroyed, you can use the heavy walls of the Sensor Complex to partially shield your 'Mechs.

Once the *Jagermechs* have been taken care of, fix your 'Mechs again at the Repair Base. When they're once again in great condition send them all southeast toward the spot marked "Southern Bridge" on the Battle Map.

Cross the Southern Bridge and destroy the Pop-Up Turrets on the other side. Then head north toward the spot marked "LRM Carriers." Destroy the three LRM Carriers you find there, and capture a pair of Resource Warehouses you discover along the way.

TIP *If any of your 'Mechs have taken some damage or are low on ammo, you may want to take them back to the Repair Bay at this point. There's a big battle ahead.*

Also, before crossing the bridge to the spot marked "Strikers", you might want to use your Camera Drone somewhere close to the Clan Administration Building or guarded Extraction Point—ideally, somewhere that several enemy 'Mechs are congregated. Thanks to the captured headquarters in the Sensor Complex, you can see all enemy 'Mechs' sensor contacts and thus pick and choose a good spot.

Then, after the Camera Drone has revealed a few enemy 'Mechs, drop your remaining artillery strikes on their heads.

Proceed north across a bridge and destroy the two *Strikers* sitting near the gate of the main Administration Building base. (Keep at long range as you do this.) Then destroy the gate from long range and run your 'Mechs through it at top speed. Then either turn them left and have them locate and destroy the Turret Control Tower that commands all Missile Turrets nearby, or have them turn right and destroy the northern Turret Power Generator shown on the Battle Map. Either way, they'll take the Missile Turrets off-line.

Once the Turrets are out of the picture, immediately turn your 'Mechs' attention to the three (or fewer) *Jagermechs* that have most likely tried to attack you by this point. Use concentrated fire to dispatch them.

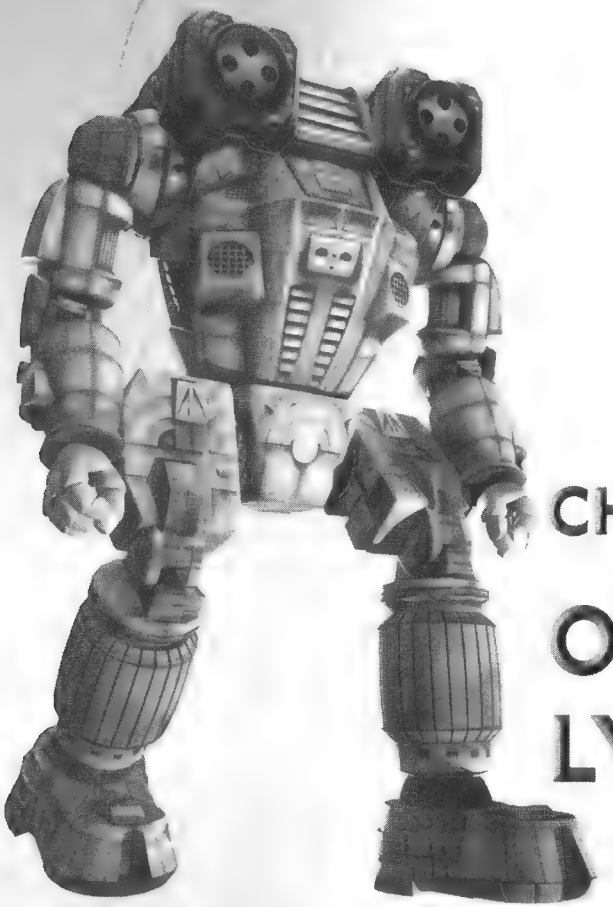
After you've taken out the *Jagermechs,* continue northwest to the Clan Administration Building and blow it up. Then visit the nearby Component Warehouses and pick up some free gear.

TIP *Again, you can return to the 'Mech Repair Bays at this point, if you want to. It's a long walk, but there's no time pressure.*

Next, slowly walk your 'Mechs up Mount Samurai. There's quite a collection of enemy units waiting for them up there, including a *Mad Cat,* two *Hunchbacks,* and four *Bulldogs.* That's a lot to deal with. Make the *Bulldogs* a priority because they're your least-armored foes, followed by any enemies who get too close. Use any remaining artillery strikes at this point.

Once all enemy units are destroyed, send all of your 'Mechs up to the Extraction Point marker and you'll win the mission.

TIP *If you fail this mission, bear in mind that you can return again and again to the 'Mech Repair Bays. It may be tiresome to keep marching back there after every combat engagement, but it makes your job a whole lot easier.*



CHAPTER 9

OPERATION 4: LYNCHPIN

The last few Operations paved the way for a larger assault on Port Arthur, but the powerful Orbital Guns the Clan captured when they first took Port Arthur are still an obstacle to an all-out assault. These weapons are capable of destroying DropShips well before they even have a chance to land.

The goal of Operation Lynchpin is to silence these Orbital Guns by whatever means necessary. In addition to emplaced guns, the Clans have deployed captured mobile guns to fortify their defenses—and finding these mobile systems may prove the biggest challenge of all.

Believe us when we say these missions are vastly more difficult than anything you've done to this point. They require precise strategies, precise timing, and all the combat tricks and tactics you've honed throughout your previous missions. Even if you execute them to perfection you run the risk of losing 'Mechs. Prepare yourself for a fight!

MISSION 4-1: CAPTURE MASAKARI AND DESTROY ORBITAL GUNS

Two of the Jaguars' deadly Orbital Guns have been pinpointed by Battalion Intelligence. They're located so far behind enemy lines that a large-scale combat drop is not feasible, but a small-scale raid is.

Intelligence also has located a *Masakari* undergoing repairs in the area. Your 15-ton combat vehicle will have to be dropped in by plane, after which it will meet up with an APC carrying Firestorm, an elite MechWarrior.

From here the combat vehicle and APC need to link up with the *Masakari,* which Firestorm will pilot. Use the *Masakari* to take out those Orbital Guns.

- Link up APC with *Masakari,* then use *Masakari* to complete the second objective.
- Destroy Orbital Guns.

Overview

The first goal in this mission is to get the APC to the *Masakari* located in the base to the east. There are several possible routes, but the most efficient (and safest) is to blast your way through narrow bands of trees. The biggest pests in this mission are the Aerospace Spotters, which will continually call in air strikes. Just keep moving as quickly as you can, keeping the *Pegasus* and the APC close together for maximum control.

Once you reach the *Masakari* and activate it, things get easier. But don't get too cocky, because a lone 'Mech without backup—even a monster like a *Masakari*—has limits.

Recommended Forces

You're allotted only 15 tons for this mission. Go buy yourself a *Pegasus.* It moves at the same rate as the APC you need to deliver, and it has some firepower to boot.

You have three small artillery strikes for this mission.

Strategy Blueprint

At the start of the mission, an APC joins your *Pegasus.* This is the vehicle you must safely deliver to the eastern base.

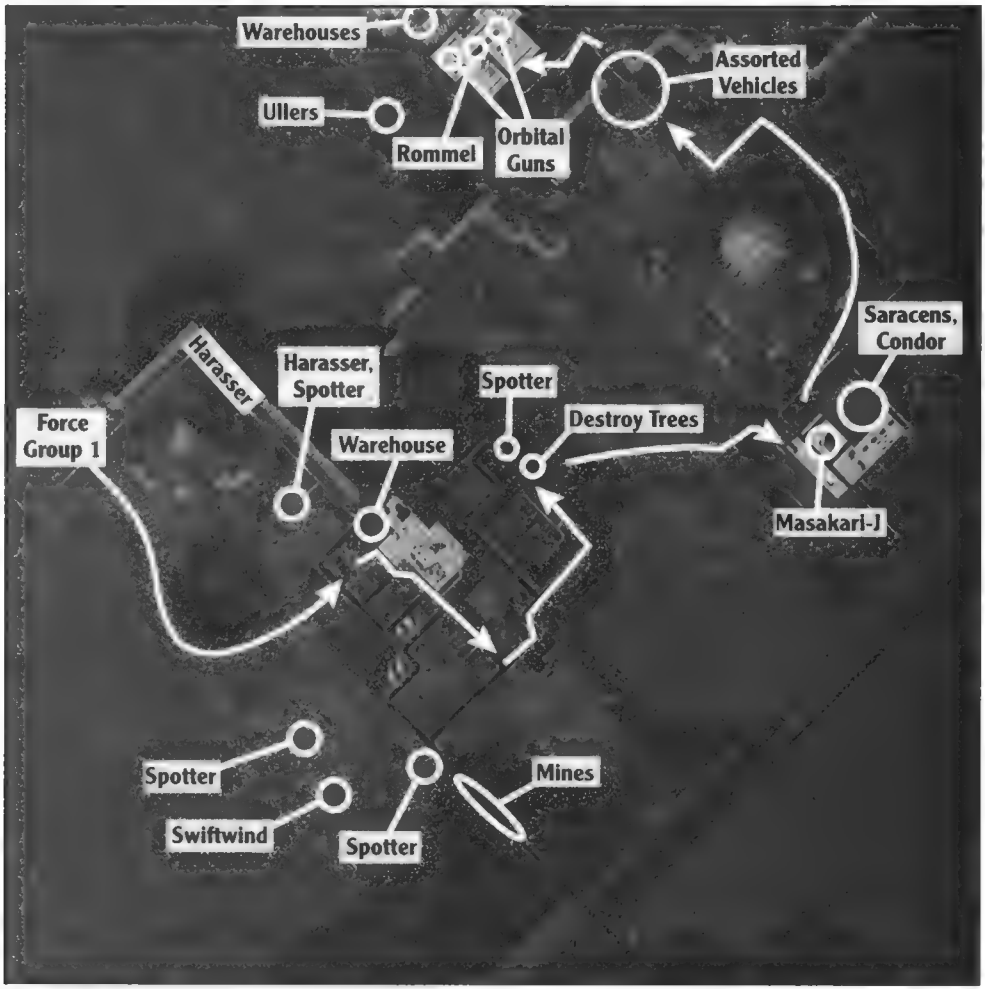
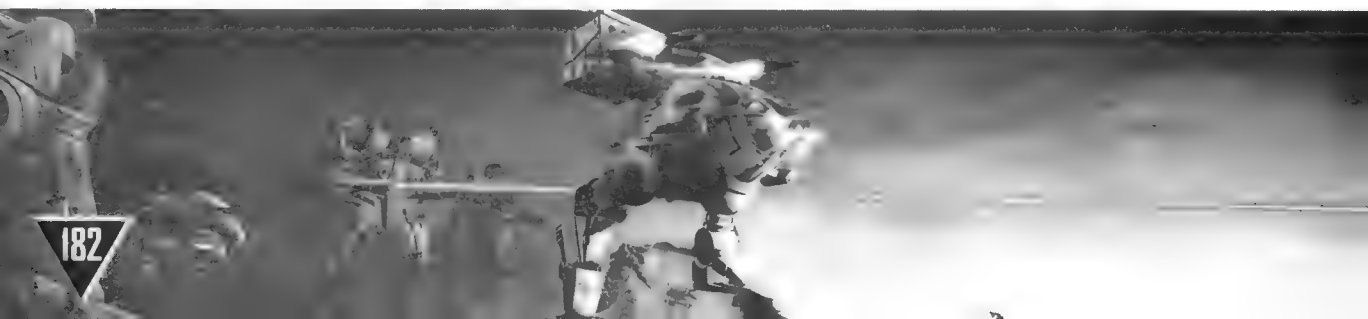


Fig. 9-1. Battle Map of Mission 4-1.

Gather the *Pegasus* and the APC and send them east along the path shown on the Battle Map. Once you have crossed the bridge, your best option is to follow the coast for a while, then veer north into the city. Again, this is the path drawn on your Battle Map.



It's likely that an Aerospace Spotter or two may notice you at this point. A few scattered Elementals also are roving through the area. Mostly, you can ignore these enemy units, though you can stop to destroy an Elemental or two if they're being a particular nuisance. Otherwise, keep moving and only alter your course if necessitated by air strikes.

As you approach the northern edge of the City area, blow up the narrow band of trees as shown on the Battle Map. Destroy as many as necessary to break through and into the open countryside; keep moving while the forest burns to avoid air strikes.

Now you're in the clear. One or two enemy vehicles may decide to pursue you, but they'll lag behind because your vehicles are faster. Keep an eye out—there's a Resource Warehouse in the City that holds weapons you will want.

Proceed northeast toward the small base containing the *Masakari,* and enter through the western gate. There are several enemy vehicles waiting in the base, including three *Saracens* and one *Condor.* Ignore them for now, and get the APC to the Repair Bay where the *Masakari* is sitting. Click on the *Masakari* itself and once the APC arrives, the *Pegasus* comes on-line.

TIP *If you want to use one of your small artillery strikes on the enemy vehicles, it'll shorten your work.*

Make sure the APC gets right up to the feet of the Masakari, *or else it won't come on-line.*

Now you're in business. Have the *Masakari* take out the four vehicles, then capture the Repair Bay and send the *Masakari* back into it for repairs and fresh ammo.

Next send all three of your units northwest along the path indicated on the Battle Map. You'll soon encounter a group of vehicles including an LRM carrier, three *Saracens,* a *Condor,* and a *Striker.* Destroy them methodically with the *Masakari,* keeping the APC and *Pegasus* well back from the fray.

TIP *Once this wave of enemy vehicles has been destroyed, you may want to send the* Masakari *back to the Repair Bay to repair and reload. This is a bit of a pain, but it makes the last part of your mission easier.*

Now send your forces northwest, toward a small base containing the Orbital Guns marked on your map. Here you will find the two Orbital Guns themselves, plus a *Rommel* and a pair of *Ullers.*

Dispatch the *Rommel* and then the *Ullers* with the *Masakari,* concentrating first on one *Uller* and then the other. Try to stay at medium range as much as possible, where your *Masakari* can utilize most of its weapons simultaneously. Also, stay somewhat back from the base itself so the Cannon Turrets and Missile Turrets scattered throughout it can't attack your *Masakari.*

TIP *Feel free to throw the* Pegasus *into the fray after the* Masakari *has engaged both* Ullers. *(It's expendable.) You also can use your remaining artillery strikes, though the* Ullers *move around so much that it's hard to catch them in the blasts.*

Fig. 9-2. Stay back from the base with the Orbital Guns until both Ullers **are destroyed.**

When the *Ullers* are gone, you can either send the *Masakari* back for repairs if it's in bad shape, or proceed to methodically destroy the nearest Turrets with ER-PPC and LRM fire. You'll be able to take out all the Turrets without suffering much collateral damage, because of the *Masakari*'s great long-range punch.

When the Turrets are gone, jump the *Masakari* up onto a ledge overlooking the Orbital Guns and capture two Resource Warehouses. Then destroy both Orbital Guns to end the mission.

MISSION 4-2: INTERDICT CLAN SUPPLIES

A large number of ordnance trucks have arrived at the Kylemartin Depot carrying supplies for remaining Clan Orbital Guns. We can't allow those Orbital Guns to be supplied.

The Clan is prepared for attacks on these Trucks, and the Trucks will scatter to the west, south, and east when your forces have been detected. This means you'll have to plan carefully if you wish to catch every Truck.

Capturing the Headquarters Building at the Depot will reveal the current locations of all Trucks.

- Destroy seven of twelve ordnance trucks.
- Destroy 12 of 12 ordnance trucks (secondary).

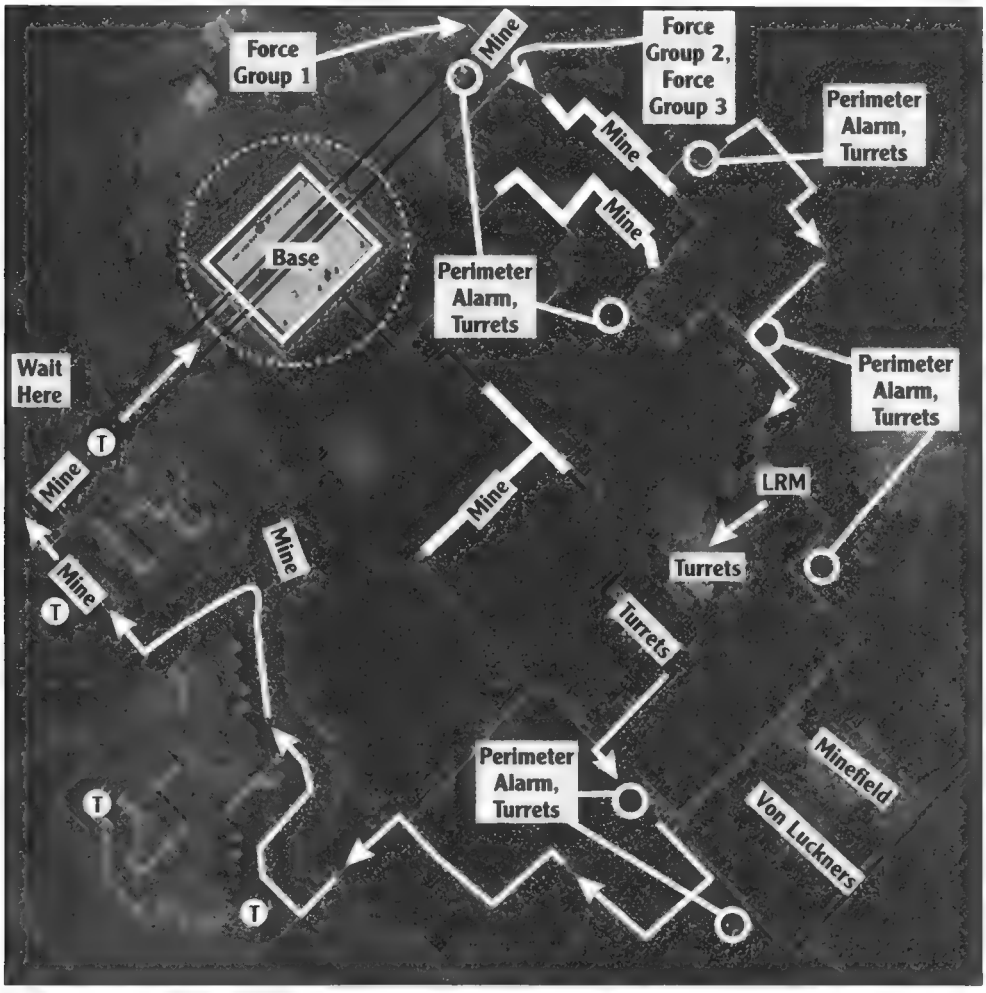


Fig. 9-3. Battle Map of Mission 4-2.

Overview

This is a mission that'll drive you crazy if you're one of those people who tries to do *everything:* Destroy every enemy, capture every resource, and complete every secondary objective. Although it's possible to do just about everything you're asked to do in this mission, it requires a big time investment. Those ordnance trucks bolt from the enemy base with lightning speed once the alarm is sounded, and catching them all is like trying to catch a fish with your bare hands.

The Strategy Blueprint assumes that you're one of those frenetic types who tries to do it all. Be forewarned, though, that doing this mission as explained in the Blueprint requires a lot of time and effort, and the rewards for completing your secondary objective may not seem worth the trouble.

TIP *If you want to just get the mission over with, do it like this: Have Force Groups 2 and 3 take over the Turret Control Tower near the spots marked "Turrets" on the map. Then return these Force Groups to their original drop point.*

Now, gradually circle Force Group 1 around toward the southern edge of the base, meanwhile gradually moving Force Groups 2 and 3 toward the northern edge. Then, when the enemy starts to spill out of the base, charge all your 'Mechs in at full speed from both sides, shooting as many Trucks as possible. You should be able to get at least five of them if you're fast, and your captured Turrets can take out the remaining two.

Recommended Forces

Your Drop Weight Limit for this mission is a substantial 360 tons. It's recommended that you take very close to all of it. Take a large force of reasonably fast 'Mechs—no *Atlases*—with good firepower. Also take along a Minelayer.

Stock up on LRMs, ER-PPCs, and other long-range weapons: They'll definitely come in handy. Don't take too many ammo-intensive weapons, however.

Also, make at least one of your 'Mechs a *Cougar* and load it with Advanced Sensors and an ECM Suite. This will effectively halve the range of enemy sensors, making it easier to evade detection from the enemy 'Mechs in the base.

You'll have one small artillery strike and two Sensor Probes for this mission.

Strategy Blueprint

As the mission starts, Force Group 1 is divided from Force Groups 2 and 3. Select Force Group 1 and march it over to join the other Force Groups as illustrated on the Battle Map, taking care to avoid the sensors of the 'Mechs in the enemy base.

TIP *The base contains a* Hollander IIc, Cougar, Hunchback, Firestarter, *and a trio of* Rommels *in addition to the 12 ordnance trucks. There are also nine Missile Turrets and a large number of structures that may be captured for salvage.*

Three circumstances will alert the base to your presence and cause the ordnance trucks to leave: Attacking the trucks, attacking the 'Mechs inside the base, and setting off a Perimeter Alarm.

The first case is self-explanatory: Don't attack the trucks until you want those ordnance trucks to flee.

The second case is a bit more complicated. If you get too close to the base and allow the 'Mechs inside to see your forces on their sensors, those 'Mechs will come out and attack. The instant you return fire on those 'Mechs, the base is alerted and the ordnance trucks take off. Thus, you need to stay out of enemy sensor range until the time is right. (Also note that standing too close to the bridge directly southwest of the base causes 'Mechs to spill out and investigate.)

Fig. 9-4. The base is heavily guarded but contains a wealth of resources for you to capture.

Note that you can safely destroy any 'Mechs that didn't originate from the base without alerting the base. To repeat, only 'Mechs that actually come out of the base will alert the base when fired upon. So, you can destroy most 'Mechs safely.

The final case is self-explanatory: Stand in range of a Perimeter Alarm for too long and it'll go off, alerting the base. Therefore, either stay away from these alarms or destroy them quickly.

Now all your 'Mechs are together. Just let them sit there for awhile, waiting. Eventually a *Cougar* and a *Hunchback IIc* will wander up from the southwest. Destroy both with concentrated fire as soon as they appear.

TIP *There are also a* Cougar *and a* Hunchback IIc *wandering around the southwest part of the map, across the river. Later, a* Centurion *will appear in the northern part of the map and another* Cougar *will start to prowl in the south. These 'Mechs all move around, so you can't predict where you'll encounter them. But when all your 'Mechs are gathered in one huge group, it's fairly easy to dispatch these loners. Just keep an eye out for them.*

When the *Cougar* and *Hunchback IIc* are destroyed, have your 'Mechs explore the general vicinity (staying out of the base 'Mechs' sensor range, of course). In several

spots are Perimeter Alarms guarded by Pop-Up Turrets; these places are noted on your Battle Map. Often the alarms are protected by forest, so you'll either need to burn down forest to shoot them or use LRMs that sail over the trees.

While your 'Mechs are exploring, have your Minelayer thoroughly mine the nearest spots labeled Mine on your Battle Map. These are possible escape routes that the Ordnance Trucks will follow when they leave the base.

After you finish the nearest minefields, send your 'Mechs along the general path highlighted on the Battle Map. They'll come across a pair of Missile Turrets in a clearing, guarded by a *Von Luckner* tank. Capture the Turret Control Tower between these Turrets and then destroy the *Von Luckner.* You now have control of both the Missile Turrets and a row of laser Turrets on a road to the southwest. They act as an insurance policy should any ordnance trucks make it all the way down here.

Keep following the general path indicated on the Battle Map, sending your Minelayer to thoroughly mine every spot shown on the Battle Map. Make sure your 'Mechs always precede your Minelayer to thwart dangers on the road ahead.

Eventually your forces will cross a bridge to the south, then loop up to the spot marked "Wait Here." (They'll encounter several enemy 'Mechs on the way, but again, your sheer number of 'Mechs should make it reasonably easy to handle them.)

As your 'Mechs wait at the spot marked "Wait Here," think: Have you forgotten to mine any spots marked "Mine" on the Battle Map? If you've got them all covered, you're ready to proceed.

TIP *If your 'Mechs are in such bad shape that they can't stand any more punishment, just have them cross the bridge and approach the base, then retreat from the base as soon as the alarm sounds. This gets the ordnance trucks moving into your mines and allows your 'Mechs to stay away from the base and its Missile Turrets.*

If your 'Mechs can handle some more damage and you want to try to capture resources within the base itself, keep following the walkthrough.

Drop a Sensor Probe over the base area and then send all your 'Mechs across the bridge leading toward the base. Move them at full speed. An enemy 'Mech or two will

rush out to meet them; don't initiate fire on the enemy, as you don't want to trigger the ordnance trucks until the last moment.

Your 'Mechs will automatically fire back when shot at, alerting the ordnance trucks as you crash the base's gate. Plunge all your 'Mechs directly into the heart of the base and take out the central Turret Control Tower, or else your 'Mechs will get demolished in no time flat by Missile Turrets. (Ignore the fleeing ordnance trucks.)

With the Missile Turrets silenced, start capturing Resource Warehouses as quickly as possible, meanwhile fighting the nearest 'Mechs in the base. You only have a short time to do this, because if you laid your minefields properly all 12 ordnance trucks soon will be destroyed by mines and the mission will automatically end.

If you missed a spot with your mines, the trucks that got through will take a little longer to escape. If this happens, the mission doesn't immediately end and you'll have to fight all enemies in the base. The mission ends when all 12 trucks are accounted for—either destroyed or escaped.

MISSION 4-3: CAPTURE CLAN FIELD BASE

Reconnaissance has located a small Clan field base in the Cambridge region. Though currently inactive, the base will become important in upcoming battles, so it's vital not to let the Jaguars maintain control of the base.

Your task is to seize control of this base by capturing the HQ Building, then defend it from the Jaguar onslaught that's sure to follow. This is no easy task, because you'll have to hurry to reach the base in time.

- Capture Base HQ Building.
- Destroy all enemy 'Mechs in the area.
- Protect all three Base Turret Control Towers.

Overview

This is a difficult mission that requires speed, skill, and grace under pressure. If you approach it in the wrong way you're sure to fail, but if you follow the Strategy Blueprint skillfully you can escape without losing a single 'Mech. It's hard, but possible.

The essence of this mission is staying one step ahead of the Jaguars. If you allow them to overtake your forces from behind, you'll pay the price. There's no stated time limit for the mission, but in essence the clock is indeed running.

The pure combat skills of your 'Mechs aren't tested as much in this mission as in others. If you do the mission right, automated Turrets will help you dispatch your foes, reducing the combat load immensely.

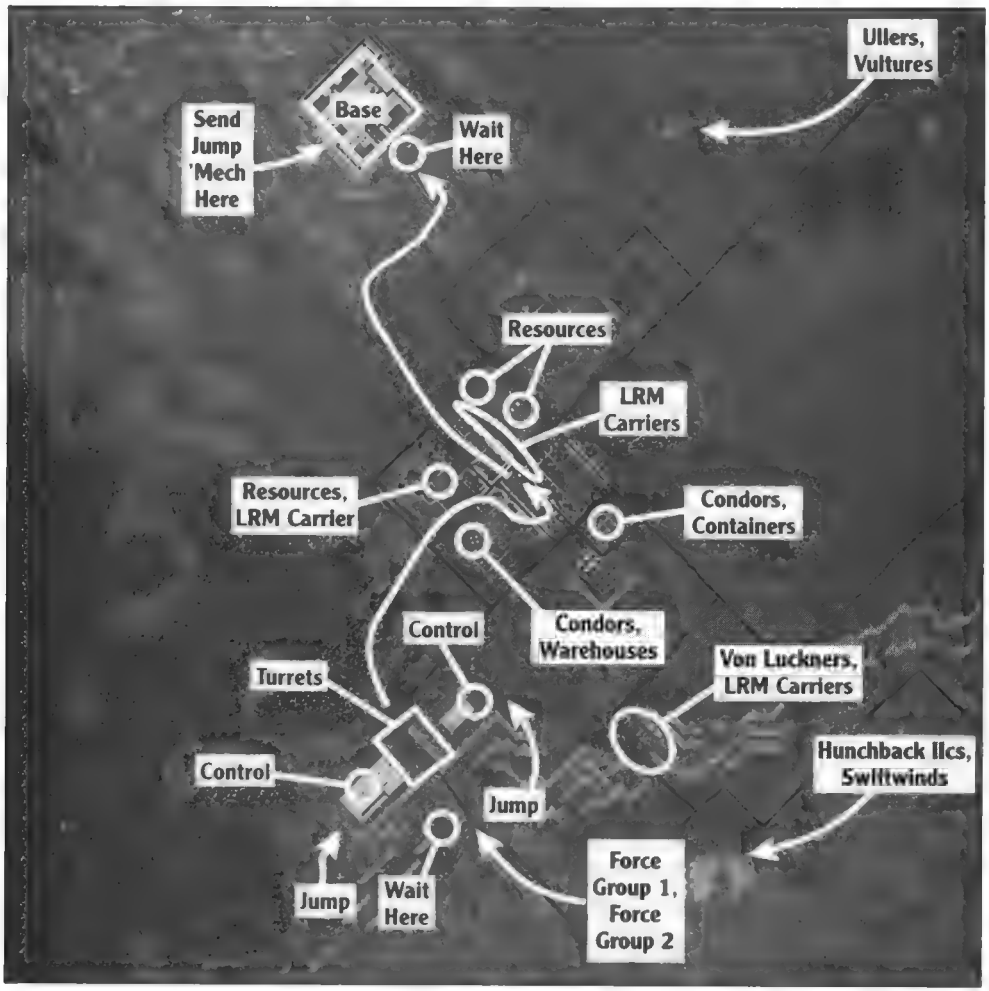
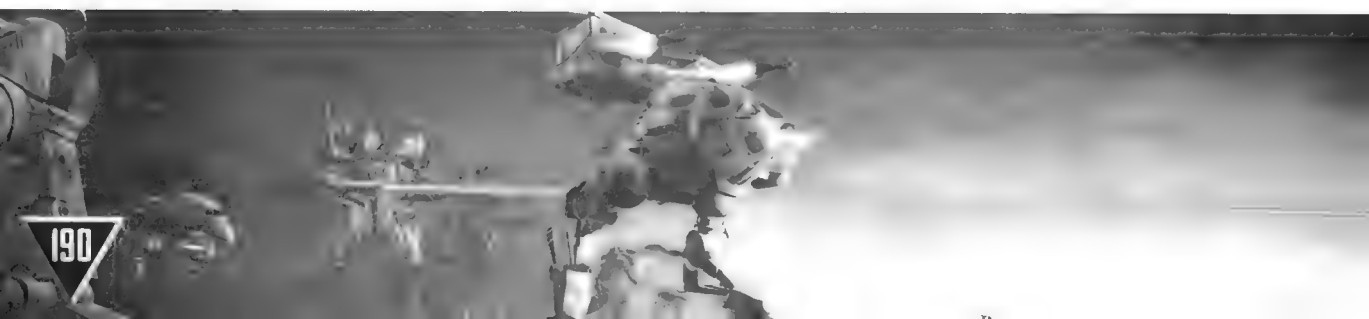


Fig. 9-5. Battle Map of Mission 4-3.



Recommended Forces

You've got 300 tons to play with, and you'll need some very particular 'Mechs to succeed.

First, *all* of your 'Mechs need to be reasonably fast. Don't take *Atlases* or *Hunchbacks* or anything that slow. Instead, use as many fast Clan 'Mechs as possible (*Masakaris* excluded). If you end up using light 'Mechs—*Cougars* and even a few *Ullers*—that's fine. Just make sure you've got some speed in your corner.

Second, two of your smaller 'Mechs need to be jump-capable. Although you technically can finish the mission without jump-capable 'Mechs, you'll take a pounding. Two small jump-capable 'Mechs are just what you need.

You have two small artillery strikes for this mission, as well as four Sensor Probes and one Camera Drone.

Strategy Blueprint

Your forces are all dropped into the same general area. Immediately start them running along the path drawn on the Battle Map, staying away from the *Von Luckners* and LRM Carriers moving into position to the northeast, and the five *Hunchback IIcs* filtering in from the south.

Soon your forces will find themselves at the spot marked "Wait Here," just south of a pass guarded by enemy Cannon Turrets and Missile Turrets. Quickly have your two small jump-capable 'Mechs leap along the paths marked "Jump" on the Battle Map, staying away from the Missile Turrets as much as possible. By circling around behind the Turrets and fortifications, they can capture the Turret Control Towers on either side of the pass (marked "Control" on the Battle Map) to assume control of the Turrets (see Figure 9-6).

Now have the rest of your 'Mechs march through the pass while your small jump 'Mechs capture salvageable structures near the Turret Control Towers.

Join all your 'Mechs together in one big group and send them northeast along the indicated path, into an urban area dotted with six *Condors,* four LRM Carriers, and various structures you can capture for salvage. Your 'Mechs should still be in great shape, so these assorted vehicles should pose little threat. Destroy them quickly and capture all the Container Stacks and Resource Warehouses. Hurry!

Fig. 9-6. Seize control of the Turret Control Towers and you'll have control of this pass.

TIP *Speed is of the essence here. If you miss one or two Resource Warehouses, that's fine. It's more important to get inside the base before the enemy does.*

Now veer northwest, still following the path indicated on the Battle Map. Meanwhile the enemy *Hunchback IIcs* to the south are probably passing through the gauntlet of Turrets you captured earlier.

Run most of your 'Mechs up to the main gate of the base and have them stop at the spot marked "Wait Here." Don't worry about the Missile Turrets guarding the base; they're deactivated.

Meanwhile, have a lone jump-capable 'Mech proceed to the southwest wall of the base, where you'll find a hole. Have it jump through the hole in the wall. Inside the base, have it capture the Gate Control Building, opening the gates so the rest of your 'Mechs can get inside.

Move your remaining 'Mechs into the base and capture every capture-able structure, including Turret Control Towers, the Base HQ Building, and a pair of 'Mech Repair Bays. Quickly repair any damaged 'Mechs in the Bays. Then have your 'Mechs stand in a cluster near the Turret Control Towers.

Around this time, a swarm of ten jump-capable *Ullers* will swarm in from the northeast, followed by three *Vultures* from the northeast and the five *Hunchback IIcs* that have been following you throughout the mission. This sounds overwhelming, but with the help of the Missile Turrets in the base, it won't be.

First come the *Ullers,* which tend to jump over the walls. Intercept them near the Turret Control Towers, and focus your fire on them. Occupying their attention keeps them from destroying the all-important Turret Control Towers.

Next come the *Vultures* and *Hunchback IIcs.* If you stand your ground near the Turret Control Towers and fire at nearby enemies, they'll concentrate on your 'Mechs instead of the Towers. Retreat badly damaged 'Mechs to the Repair Bays.

If you manage to keep the Towers intact, destroying the enemy 'Mechs should pose very few problems. If the onslaught is over and the mission still hasn't ended, go explore the city area for any straggling *Hunchback IIcs.*

TIP *Gaining control of Missile Turrets and moving quickly are the two keys to this mission. If the* Hunchback IIcs *catch your forces from behind, or if the* Ullers *get inside the base before your forces are there, you'll know you were too slow.*

Also, if you took significant damage while taking over that first group of Missile Turrets guarding the pass, you need to try again and keep your forces well back from the missiles while your jump-capable 'Mechs sneak around back to capture the Turret Control Towers.

MISSION 4-4: CAPTURE INDUSTRIAL FACILITY

Intelligence has located an industrial facility the enemy is using to fabricate replacement 'Mech parts. Your task is to capture the two Industrial Complexes that will give us access to the facility.

Intelligence also reports that Jaguar forces are currently en route to the Complexes in an effort to fortify their defenses. You've been provided with numerous Sensor Probes that will help you monitor the battlefield for newcomers and destroy them before they can reach the facility. If you allow enough reinforcements to reach the facility, you'll have a very hard time with your siege.

Also note that the Jaguars would rather destroy the Complexes than let them fall into your hands.

- Capture Industrial Complexes.
- Defend Industrial Complexes.
- Destroy all enemy forces.

Overview

At first sight this appears to be a mission of pure combat—and for the most part it is. However, you have to approach the combat in a very particular manner, making sure that your enemies can't all assemble in one big group. If you let this happen, your chances of winning will quickly approach zero.

Bridges are the primary tools you'll use to control the flow of enemies. You'll capitalize on the fact that they can be destroyed and that enemy forces are vulnerable when they cross bridges.

This mission might require more than one try, though if you execute the maneuvers in the Strategy Blueprint you should emerge victorious. Don't be surprised, however, if you lose a 'Mech despite a flawless tactical performance.

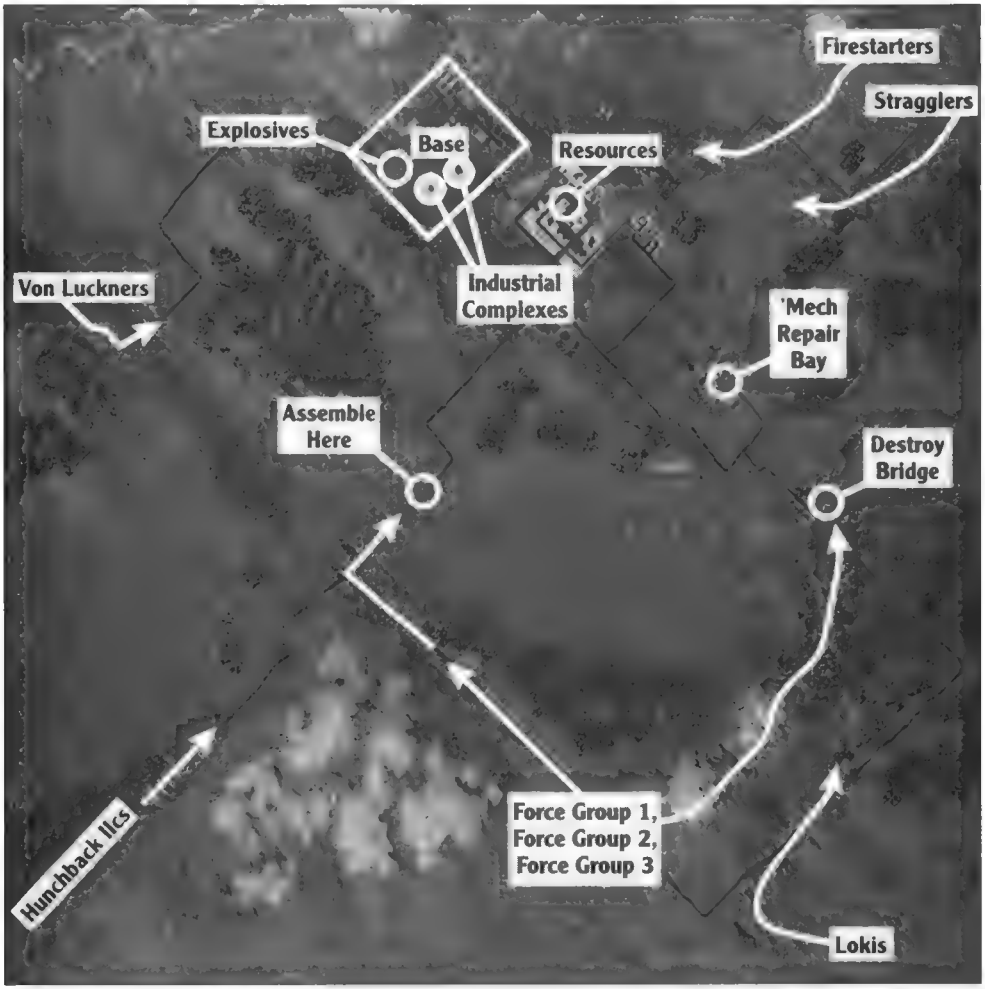


Fig. 9-7. Battle Map of Mission 4-4.

Recommended Forces

You've got 480 tons for this mission, and low-balling by more than a few tons is not recommended. This is a mission of intense combat, so shortchanging yourself usually just leads to damaged or destroyed 'Mechs—and high repair bills.

It's recommended that you take several heavy 'Mechs for this mission, plus at least one smaller, faster 'Mech (preferably a *Cougar*). *Atlases* are a trifle too slow and aren't recommended.

Load your 'Mechs with lots of PPCs and ER-PPCs, as well as LRMs and other long-range weapons. Don't exclude short-range weapons completely, but make sure long-range weapons are abundant.

You have one large artillery strike and six Sensor Probes for this mission. Conserve the artillery strike until you're directed to use it in the Strategy Blueprint.

Strategy Blueprint

Your forces are all dropped to the same location. As soon as they hit the ground, several groups of enemies will start in motion toward the Industrial Complexes noted on your Battle Map.

TIP *Your enemies will all try to reach the Industrial Complexes and then guard them. If allowed to do so, they'll gather there in a massive group and wait for you to arrive.*

Your enemies' starting positions are marked on the Battle Map. These enemies are:

- *Two* Lokis and *two* Thors *that attempt to cross the easternmost bridge*
- *Five* Hunchback IIcs—*two that can jump—that try to cross the central bridge*
- *Five* Von Luckner *tanks and three* Bulldog *tanks that try to cross the westernmost bridge*
- *Ten* Firestarters *that approach the base from the northeast*

A few additional forces, noted as "Stragglers" on the Battle Map, periodically will appear from the northeast as the mission continues.

Immediately select your smallest 'Mech and send it northeast. Have it follow the path on the Battle Map that leads northeast from your drop point—the one that leads to the spot labeled "Destroy Bridge."

Simultaneously, select all your remaining 'Mechs and have them take the other path, which leads to a spot labeled "Assemble Here."

If you move quickly and don't waste any time, your fast 'Mech will reach the spot labeled "Destroy Bridge" well before the *Lokis* try to cross that bridge. Have the small 'Mech cross the bridge and then destroy it with weapons fire. (We repeat, don't destroy the bridge until *after* your 'Mech has safely crossed.)

Meanwhile your other 'Mechs should gather at the spot marked "Assemble Here," somewhat removed from the map's central bridge.

After your small 'Mech has taken out the eastern bridge, have it run over to the spot labeled "Assemble Here" and join its companions.

Now all your 'Mechs are at the spot labeled "Assemble Here," arrayed just a little way back from the bridge as seen in Figure 9-8.

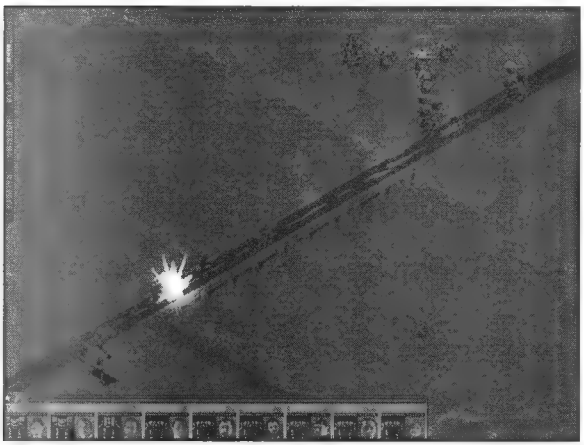


Fig. 9-8. Enemy 'Mechs are vulnerable when forced to cross the bridge.

Eventually the *Hunchback IIcs* will arrive and begin to cross the central bridge. Have your 'Mechs attack from their current position (hold down C) as early as possible, targeting the closest *Hunchback IIc* first, then the next, and so forth. Your 'Mechs' withering long-range fire will stop the *Hunchback IIcs* in their tracks as they try to cross the bridge. Fallen *Hunchback IIcs* will temporarily block the *Hunchback IIcs* behind them, buying you even more time. If you're lucky, the *Hunchback* won't get in more than a few shots before they're all completely destroyed.

Now your forces should wait a while. Eventually a group of two *Lokis* and two *Thors* will arrive south of the "Assemble Here" point. As with the *Hunchback IIcs,* you should engage them with long-range fire as they attempt to cross the bridge. Your great number of long-range weapons, coupled with concentrated fire, should allow you to finish off the enemy 'Mechs with relative ease.

TIP *You shouldn't have lost more than one 'Mech in this whole exchange. If you managed to lose more than one 'Mech, or you had more than one 'Mech lose the majority of its weapons, you need to try again.*

Next time, start your long-range attacks earlier and make sure you move wounded 'Mechs to the back of the group to protect them. This is key, as the enemy tends to focus on one of your 'Mechs at a time.

When the *Lokis* and *Thors* are gone, briskly move most of your forces toward the 'Mech Repair Bay shown on the Battle Map. Have a lone scout 'Mech explore the northeast corner of the map. If any stragglers are appearing from the northeast, you might want to have your whole 'Mech group run up to destroy them before your 'Mechs go to the Repair Bay.

As your 'Mechs repair themselves, keep watching that northeast corner for stragglers, and intercept them as they appear. Over a long period of time, the following units will appear from that corner:

- Two *Firestarters*
- Two *Lokis*
- Two *Hunchback IIcs*
- One *Bulldog*
- One *Von Luckner*
- One *Thor*

These stragglers will appear in ragged pairs. Keep watching for them and destroying them before they reach the base, repairing your 'Mechs at the Repair Bay during slow times.

The *Thor* is the last enemy that appears from that corner. When you've destroyed it, you'll know it's time to attack the base.

After destroying all stragglers and repairing your 'Mechs one last time, you should attack the base, which is guarded by ten *Firestarters,* five *Von Luckners,* three *Bulldogs,* and any stragglers you didn't intercept.

You can attack the base from the front or through the woods in the southwest. If you attack through the woods, you should be able to destroy the explosive tanks marked "Explosives" on the Battle Map and, hopefully, take out a few enemy units in the process.

Regardless of where you attack from, don't charge into the base with reckless abandon. Approach just far enough to get some *Firestarters* to attack you, then retreat slightly. By attacking in this way, you can usually engage the *Firestarters* without rousing the vehicles parked near the rear of the base.

Start targeting and destroying individual *Firestarters* as soon as they get into range. Concentrated fire is a must! If the *Von Luckners* join the fray, use your lone artillery strike on them; otherwise, wait until you see a swarm of stationary *Von Luckners* to use the strike.

The melee is sure to be wild, but you can eliminate targets quickly with your 'Mechs' concentrated fire. When there are only a few *Firestarters* or vehicles left, they'll make a break for the Industrial Complexes and try to blow them up. Be prepared for this, and move toward the Complexes as the battle winds down. Pursue any remaining units and destroy them before they manage to blow up the Complexes, targeting the ones closest to the Complexes first.

When all enemies are gone, capture several nearby structures with salvageable resources. Then capture the Industrial Complexes themselves. Since the enemy is now dead, the mission ends when you capture the Complexes.

Mission 4-5: Intercept Enemy Force

Orbital Reconnaissance has located a large force of Jaguar 'Mechs that has outflanked us and is approaching our vulnerable back lines. If they break through, they'll cause great damage to our supply lines, support bases, and even our command structure.

The enemy 'Mechs will be moving from south to north; none may be allowed to slip through. The majority of your forces will be dropped near the north end of the engagement area, though two scouts may be dropped further south.

- Destroy all enemy 'Mechs.

Overview

The last few missions have been no cakewalk, but this is one of the hardest yet. Precise timing and a bit of luck are necessary to beat this mission, so you should expect to try it more than once.

The key to this mission lies in funneling the enemies into paths where you can deal with them. This is a fine art, as there are multiple groups of enemies appearing at various times throughout the mission, and all must be contained. Not a single 'Mech can get through if you hope to emerge victorious.

Recommended Forces

You've got 500 tons at your disposal, and we suggest that you use all of it. Place an assortment of extremely heavy-hitting 'Mechs with PPCs and other potent weapons in

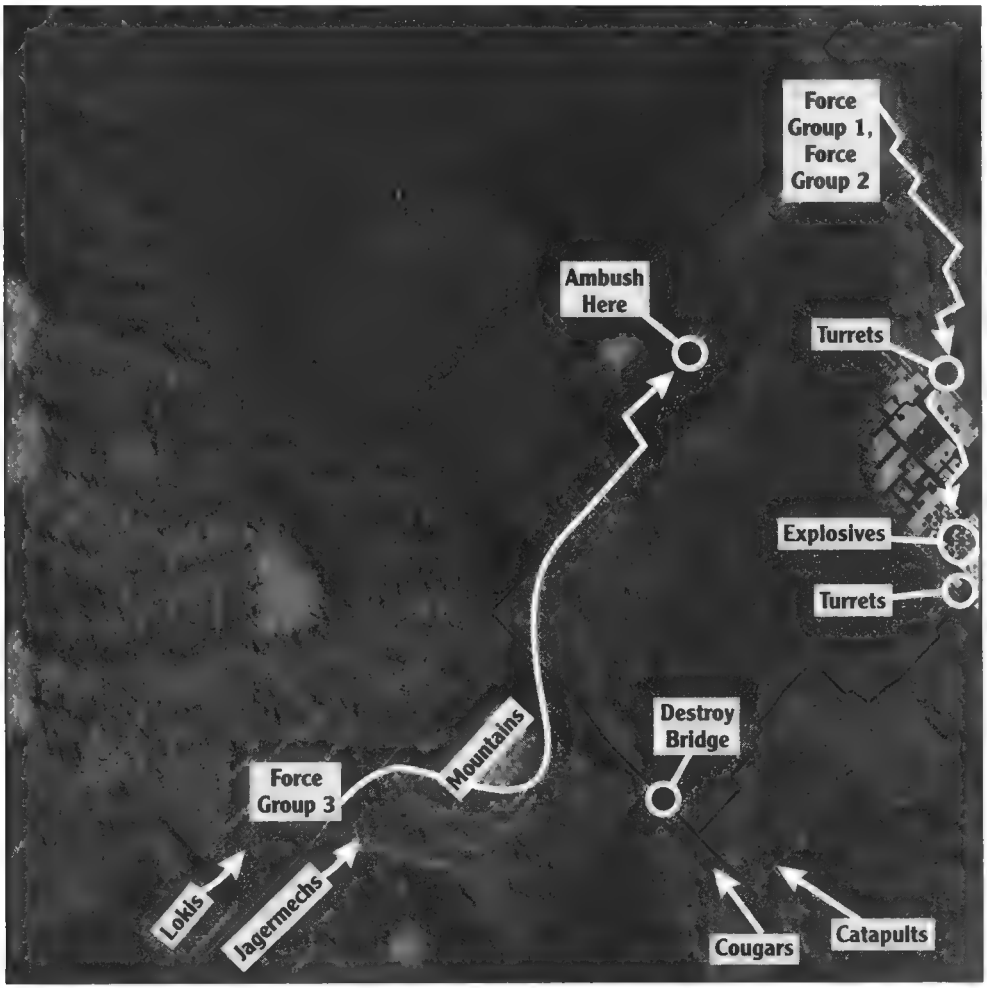


Figure 9-9. Battle Map of Mission 4-5.

the first two Force Groups, and place a single *Cougar* or *Uller* in the third group.

Speed is semi-important for this mission, so don't bring any *Atlases*.

You've got three small artillery strikes, four large artillery strikes, and two Sensor Probes in this mission. Pay close attention to the Strategy Blueprint for tips on using these resources wisely; they're the keys to victory.

Strategy Blueprint

The very instant your forces touch the ground, get your lone light 'Mech in Force Group 3 headed toward the mountain marked on your Battle Map. Simultaneously, have your Force Group 1 and 2 'Mechs proceed south along the indicated path. Move both groups at a full run, and don't let them stop.

When your Force Group 3 'Mech climbs the mountain, it'll reveal a bridge to the east. Destroy this bridge immediately with two small artillery strikes, then have the Force Group 3 'Mech continue up to the spot marked "Ambush Here."

TIP *If any enemy* Cougars *cross the bridge before you destroy it, start over and move faster this time. You must destroy the bridge before the* Cougars *cross.*

Meanwhile, Force Groups 1 and 2 should proceed along their southern path. At the first point marked "Turrets" on the Battle Map, have them capture the Turret Control Tower and keep heading south.

Your 'Mechs will pass through a grid of high-pressure explosive fuel tanks marked "Explosives" on the map, then encounter the second spot marked "Turrets." Here, they'll find a couple more Turrets and a concrete wall without a gate (there's just a hole). Have them capture the nearby Turret Control Tower and then stand squarely in the hole in the concrete wall. Try to position them so they physically block the hole.

Shortly, a group of six *Cougars* approaches from the south. Destroy them as they arrive with concentrated fire, using the "Attack from Current Position" order to force your 'Mechs to stand their ground as they fight. This is very important, as it allows them to block the hole in the wall so no *Cougars* can get through.

TIP *If the* Cougars *get through the hole in the wall before your 'Mechs can block it, you were too slow. You can still try to destroy all the* Cougars, *but if you fail you'll have a much rougher time of it later in the mission.*

If more than one Cougar *slips past your forces, they'll be very hard to catch, but if only one slips through, you can have your Force Group 3 'Mech try to cut it off.*

Cougars *that aren't destroyed will loop north and around the lake, then proceed south to link up with the* Lokis *and* Jagermechs *marching up from the south. They'll be a real nuisance later on, so destroy them now!*

When all *Cougars* are destroyed, send your Force Group 1 and 2 'Mechs back to their initial drop point, then from there to the spot marked "Ambush Here." This spot marks the beginning of a narrow path leading through the forest.

Pack your 'Mechs into this narrow forest path, trying to block it.

TIP *Again, it's vitally important that all of your 'Mechs pack into a small section of path as shown in Figure 9-10. By crowding in, they effectively block the path so that no enemies can sneak through.*

Around this time, a group of four *Catapults* will slowly start to filter up from the south on the eastern side of the river. Keep an eye on them but don't worry about them yet.

Fig. 9-10. Pack your 'Mechs into this small area, leaving no room for the enemy to squeeze past.

Also, a group of four *Jagermechs* and four *Lokis* will start to march north on the western side of the river. You'll see them approach, thanks to having surveyed the mountain earlier.

Once all your 'Mechs are in place at the ambush point, drop all but one large artillery strike on the enemy *Lokis*. (Save your last small strike as well.) You *must* target the *Lokis* and damage a few of them, because they're the fastest remaining enemy 'Mechs, and they'll find a way to slip past your forces if you don't damage them. Note that the *Lokis* will start running after getting hit by the first artillery strike.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the river, the *Catapults* should be approaching the spot marked "Explosives." At that spot, a large grid of pressurized tanks flanks the road on either side. When the *Catapults* are all near this grid, blow up the tanks with your last small artillery strike, taking all four *Catapults* with them.

Now the only 'Mechs left are the *Lokis* and *Jagermechs*. When they approach your ambush spot, have all your 'Mechs attack *from their current position*. Attack *Lokis* if possible, ignoring the *Jagermechs* if necessary—remember, the *Jagermechs* are slow and are unlikely to sneak through your ambush.

TIP *Again, it's vital to use the "Attack from Current Position" command (the* C *key). This forces your 'Mechs to stand their ground while they fight, not budging an inch. If you allow them to move around instead, they will—and the* Lokis *will sneak past.*

Destroy all remaining *Lokis* and *Jagermechs* to end the mission, using your remaining large artillery strike to deal further damage while the enemy 'Mechs are standing still. The mission is a success when the last 'Mech is wiped out.

If you did everything correctly, you may still have lost a 'Mech or two—after all, you were facing rough opposition.

TIP *If you failed, chances are good that timing was your downfall. Here's where timing comes into play:*

- *You need to get Force Group 3 over to reveal and destroy the bridge before the* Cougars *get across.*
- *You need to get Force Groups 1 and 2 into place to intercept the* Cougars.
- *You need to time your artillery strike on the Explosives area so that every* Catapult *is destroyed.*
- *You need to damage the* Lokis *with large artillery strikes, which is tough because they're moving.*

Also, you need to make sure your 'Mechs fire from their current position *without moving around, or else they'll scatter and allow* Cougars *or* Lokis *to get through the ambush.*

Make no mistake, this is one hard mission. Expect to try it multiple times.

Mission 4-6: Destroy Hidden Smoke Jaguar Orbital Guns

Intelligence has located the Mobile Orbital Guns that were responsible for disabling your DropShips during the initial attack. These guns must be destroyed before the main invasion force reaches orbit.

Aerial reconnaissance has located the position of the three Gun Emplacements, but because of the Jaguars' air superiority an air strike is not feasible.

Each site (Alpha, Beta, Gamma) contains one or more Mobile Orbital Guns. All guns at all locations must be destroyed for the mission to be considered a success.

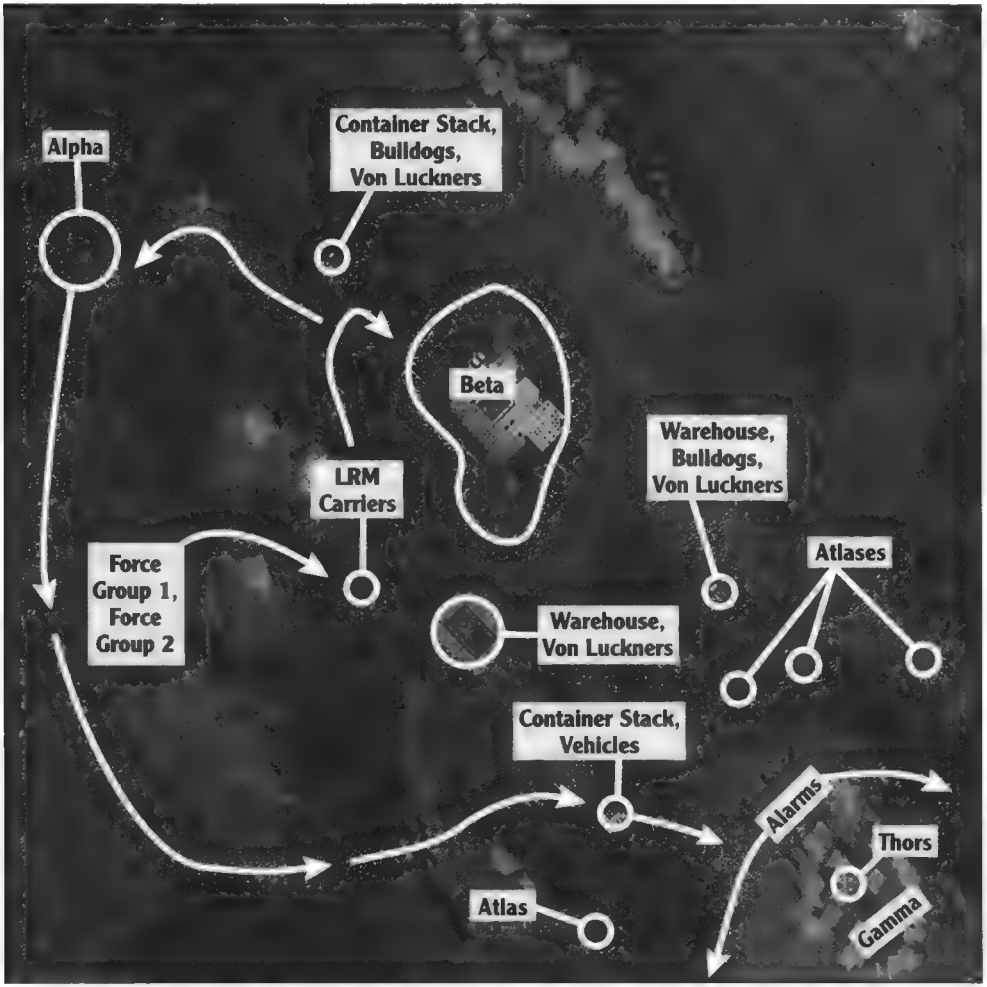


Figure 9-11. Battle Map of Mission 4-6.

- Destroy Mobile Orbital Gun at Alpha.
- Destroy Mobile Orbital Guns at Beta.
- Destroy Mobile Orbital Guns at Gamma.

Overview

This mission is relatively straightforward, and involves marching your 'Mechs from one Orbital Gun site to the next in a methodical fashion. Numerous caches of salvageable materials are scattered throughout the map. These are noted on the Battle Map, but the walkthrough doesn't recommend visiting all of them because of the extra punishment your 'Mechs will receive. However, feel free to capture these extra structures if you're feeling brave.

You'll find that the enemy forces guarding the Gamma site are extremely formidable. Thus, this walkthrough recommends a mad dash to destroy the guns instead of a grinding assault that takes on all enemies to the finish.

Recommended Forces

You have 560 tons but only eight 'Mech slots for this mission. Don't bring any *Atlases,* but do try to use any *Lokis, Vultures,* or other big, fast OmniMechs you happen to possess.

If you want to take a single small 'Mech, however, make it a *Cougar*—and load Advanced Sensors and a Guardian ECM onto it.

Long-range weapons are again a high priority in this mission; PPCs and the like will serve you well.

You have three small artillery strikes for this mission.

Strategy Blueprint

Your forces are dropped in the western part of the map. Collect all your 'Mechs and guide them along the path drawn on the Battle Map, which leads to the trio of LRM Carriers noted on the map. Destroy these vehicles. If you're feeling ambitious, you also can capture the Warehouse located a bit to the east, which is guarded by *Von Luckners.*

Now gather your forces and have them approach the lone man-made bridge leading to the Beta site, which is a well-fortified island base. (Note that there's actually a land bridge that leads to the Beta site as well, which serves as a backup if the man-made bridge gets destroyed.)

A trio of *Von Luckners,* a *Vulture,* and a pair of Aerospace Spotters guard the bridge to the base. Fight them from afar without crossing the bridge. As you fight, a pair of *Thors* will join in the fray. Continue to pound your enemies from long range, then enter the base when all visible forces are destroyed.

Capture the Sensor Control Building at the center of the base after destroying the two LRM Carriers guarding it. Capturing the building gives you control of multiple Sensor Towers overlooking the rest of the map. Then, locate the two Mobile Orbital Guns in the base, one of which is guarded by a pair of LRM Carriers. Destroy both Guns and their LRM Carrier guards.

Finally, take over the 'Mech Repair Bays and thoroughly repair your 'Mechs in them.

When your 'Mechs are fully repaired, go back across the bridge and proceed toward the Alpha site, taking the indicated path. This site features tough defenses, including a pair of Aerospace Spotters, an *Atlas,* a pair of *Vultures,* four *Von Luckners,* and—very noteworthy—a large group of unmanned ordnance and Fuel Trucks.

Approach this encampment slowly, picking off the closest enemy units and letting them come to you instead of charging in. When one or more enemy 'Mechs approach the Fuel Trucks, detonate a nearby truck to set off the whole pile and (hopefully) destroy one or more enemies. If you're patient you can destroy the *Atlas* and at least one *Vulture* this way.

When all enemies at the Alpha site have been cleared out, destroy the lone Mobile Orbital Gun at the center of the area and capture the Mobile HQ.

When you've done all there is to do in this area, send your 'Mechs south along the path outlined on the Battle Map. This path eventually loops east, toward the spot labeled "Container Stack and Vehicles."

Fig. 9-12. This pileup of explosive Fuel Trucks is a valuable tool. Detonate it while enemy 'Mechs are nearby.

TIP *Feel free to visit the 'Mech Repair Bays again before taking this path.*

As you approach the spot marked "Container Stack and Vehicles," be sure to avoid the sensors of the Atlases *parked to either side. You don't want to alert them to your presence.*

If you brought a Cougar *with a Guardian ECM, avoiding the* Atlases' *sensors is easy. Without the ECM it's still possible, but you have to be careful not to let your 'Mechs wander.*

At the spot labeled "Container Stack and Vehicles," you must destroy three *Von Luckners* and two LRM Carriers. Capture the Container Stack when all vehicles are destroyed.

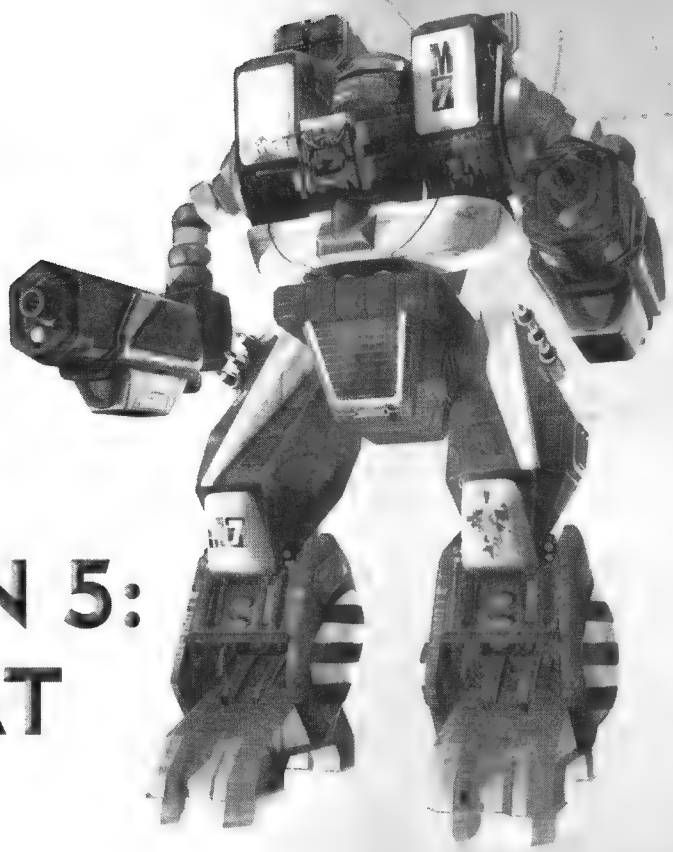
Now gather your 'Mechs, and make a beeline toward the spot marked Orbital Guns, destroying any trees that get in your way. Remember to steer clear of those *Atlases'* sensors!

You'll soon hit a ring of Perimeter Alarms. Don't bother to painstakingly destroy them, because a couple *Thors* parked near the Gamma site will detect your forces by the time you're close to the alarms—and when the *Thors* attack, the *Atlases* also start lumbering toward you.

Ignore the *Thors* and *Atlases* as best you can, therefore, and have your 'Mechs make a mad dash for the spot labeled Orbital Guns. Destroy the three Orbital Guns you find in a line there, using concentrated weapons fire. Also, use your three small artillery strikes to speed the process.

When these three Orbital Guns are destroyed, the mission ends.

TIP *Your 'Mechs might have taken a beating from those final* Thors, *but if they were reasonably fast and made a beeline for the Orbital Guns instead of fighting back, they should have gotten to the Guns before the sluggish* Atlases *could really jump into the act.*



CHAPTER 10

OPERATION 5: CUTTHROAT

Operation Lynchpin was a rousing success—so much so, in fact, that the Jaguars have retreated to defend the Starbase. Your task in Operation Cutthroat is to foil their efforts and open the Starbase to the main Allied invasion force. This is the most decisive Operation of the entire campaign; your company's failure would mean the failure of the entire invasion effort.

The balance of the struggle for Port Arthur rests in your hands, MechCommander. You can tip it one way or the other by your actions.

TIP *As with the missions in Operation 4, Operation 5's missions are difficult enough that even a flawless tactical performance can't guarantee a perfectly intact corps of BattleMechs. Expect to take some serious damage on these missions, and don't second-guess yourself if you fail. These missions are difficult enough that you're unlikely to succeed on your first attempt.*

MISSION 5-1: RESCUE ALLIED COMMANDER

Captain Nairn of X-ray Company successfully led a Binary of Clan OmniMechs from their normal post (defending the Starbase) into a trap. However, while executing this maneuver he was pinned down by Jaguar reinforcements. He's managed to maneuver his *Atlas* onto high ground and defend himself, but he can't hold out forever.

Your task is to link up with Nairn and escort his *Atlas* back to the Extraction Point. You might have to be careful, though, as Nairn is unpredictable and might attempt to attack the Jaguars instead of simply escaping as planned.

- Escort Allied officer to Extraction Point.

Overview

This mission can be frustrating because it requires you to protect a unit that's not directly under your control. Captain Nairn has a tendency to make some rather questionable tactical decisions, and his poor judgment will get your mission off to a dangerous start.

As the mission commences, Nairn and company are located at the extreme northern edge of the combat area while your forces start out at the south. Nairn and his men are quickly swarmed by *Vultures* and *Hunchback IIcs,* but instead of taking a roundabout southeastern escape route (which is free of enemy influence) he chooses to rush headlong into an enemy base. Thus, your only option is to attack the base from the south and clean it out before he gets there, otherwise Nairn's *Atlas* will be picked apart.

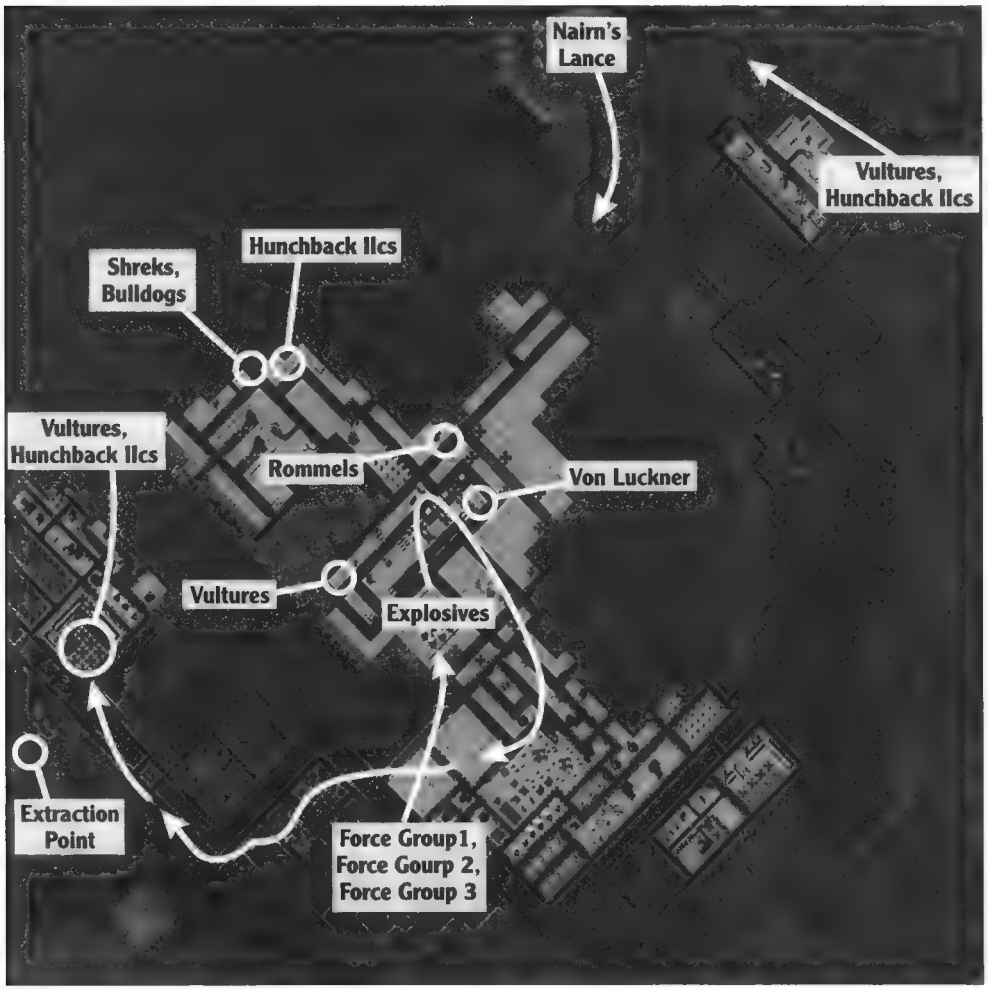


Figure 10-1. Battle Map of Mission 5-1.

Recommended Forces

You have 500 tons of 'Mech to play with in this mission. Avoid taking the very largest 'Mechs, such as *Atlases,* as they're too slow for the initial rush on the enemy base. Instead, take substantial Clan 'Mechs, which are much lighter on their feet than heavy Inner Sphere Designs: *Thors* and *Lokis* are ideal if you've managed to salvage any, and *Vultures* also are a good choice.

Take heavy-hitting weapons as usual. Long-range weapons are ideal because you'll face so many *Vultures* in this mission that you'll need to trade long-range fire.

You have four small and two large artillery strikes for this mission, plus one Sensor Probe.

Don't take a Guardian ECM, in this mission it sometimes pays to let the enemy see you ahead of time.

Strategy Blueprint

Your 'Mechs are all dropped to the same area. Select them and immediately have them all start to march north as indicated on the Battle Map. Meanwhile Nairn's Force Group of 'Mechs is busy fighting a group of four *Vultures* and two *Hunchback IIcs* in the northern part of the map.

Following the path drawn on the Battle Map, your 'Mechs eventually will reach a concrete wall fortified with turrets. Don't break through it yet.

Fig. 10-2. Detonate these tanks to take out a pair of Vultures.

On the other side of the wall is a grid of explosive tanks marked "Explosives" on your Battle Map. Gather your 'Mechs near the wall and wait just a moment as two *Vultures* on the other side approach. Drop a small artillery strike on the explosive tanks (or just shoot them) as the *Vultures* approach them, hopefully destroying both *Vultures* outright.

Now blast a hole in the wall and march all your 'Mechs into the base. Capture the nearby Turret Control Tower and proceed north through the base, destroying the *Rommels* and *Von Luckner* parked in there. Also capture the base's northern Turret Control Tower and destroy its northern gate.

TIP *Around this time, Nairn will approach the base's northern gate in his* Atlas. *If you're incredibly unlucky he'll get destroyed before entering the base, but if you're quick to take over those Turrets and destroy the northern gate, his 'Mech should remain intact—and he'll walk into the base to join your forces.*

As Nairn joins your troops, a pair of *Hunchback IIcs* and some heavy vehicles (*Shreks* and *Bulldogs*) will attack from the western edge of the base. Destroy the *Hunchbacks* and vehicles, and gather around Nairn.

Nairn won't stop when he enters the base. Instead, he'll keep moving south toward the Extraction Point. You must keep your 'Mechs near him, firing at enemies as you retreat. Skillful use of your artillery strikes is absolutely crucial here; use the small ones to destroy vehicles and moving 'Mechs, and use the big ones to destroy 'Mechs that are more or less stationary.

Keep fighting as you follow Nairn, using occasional bursts of concentrated fire to level enemies and then running back to catch up with Nairn. You should be able to incapacitate most enemies well before Nairn approaches the Extraction Point.

As Nairn approaches the Extraction Point, have your 'Mechs walk out in front of his *Atlas*. A pair of *Vultures* and a pair of *Hunchback IIcs* are parked near the Extraction Point, and you'll need to destroy them to end the mission. Use concentrated fire as usual, but make sure to fire at any enemy that's targeting Nairn's *Atlas*, distracting the enemy so it won't destroy him.

The mission ends when these four 'Mechs are destroyed.

TIP *Don't be surprised if you fail; this is a tough mission that's very combat-intensive. The keys are:*

- *Make sure you destroy those two* Vultures *with the explosives marked on the map. If you don't at least send them to the brink of destruction with the explosion, they'll only add to your problems.*
- *Make effective use of those artillery strikes, using them to destroy pursuers. This requires a good sense of timing.*
- *Stick with Nairn, and don't allow him to get too far away.*

MISSION 5-2: EXTERMINATE CLAN PRESENCE

The Binary of Clan 'Mechs that Commander Nairn led into a trap prior to the last mission is still wandering around the countryside. However, rescue forces are expected to be dropped soon—so if we're to finish them off, it has to be quickly (within 15 minutes).

These eight OmniMechs are piloted by some of the Jaguars' very finest MechWarriors, and destroying them would be a tremendous blow to Jaguar morale. Unfortunately, the enemy has dug in for a long wait, and they will be extremely difficult to destroy.

- Seek and Destroy all eight Clan 'Mechs.

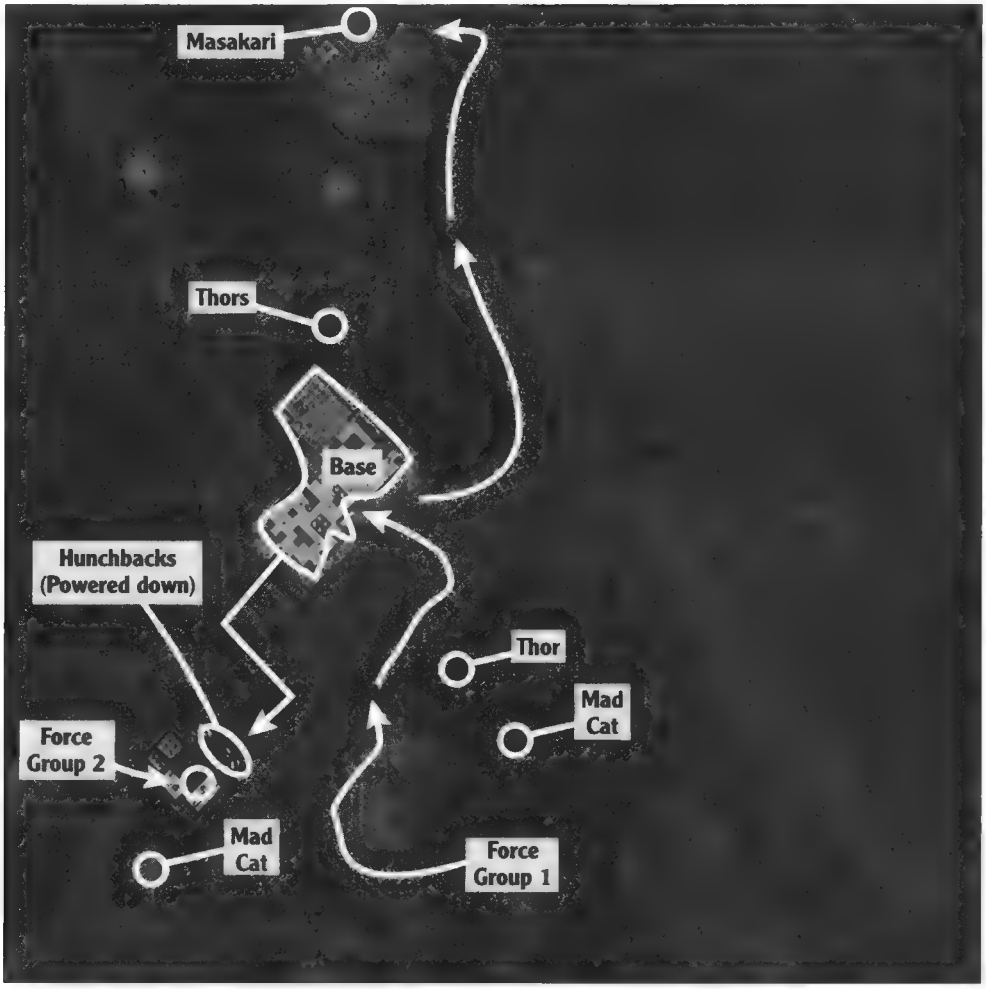


Fig. 10-3. Battle Map of Mission 5-2.

Overview

This mission will teach you a little bit about the value of quality versus quantity. You're fighting a very low number of enemy 'Mechs in this mission but they're all well equipped, and they're all piloted by the Jaguars' elite men. As a result, your 'Mechs are going to get damaged or even destroyed in a matter of moments, whereas against lesser pilots they'd only receive scratches.

This is a simple mission, strategically: You must destroy all eight enemy 'Mechs. The difficult part, however, is the combat itself. Be sure to take your very best 'Mechs and pilots, as well as your very best weapons. And don't forget to keep moving!

Recommended Forces

You've got 400 tons at your disposal. Take large Clan 'Mechs loaded with the best Clan weapons you've got. Make sure your very best pilots are in the cockpits, as well.

Potent long-range weapons such as Gauss Rifles and ER-PPCs are an excellent choice for this mission, so long as you remember to conserve them (don't waste the Gauss Rifles' ammo by shooting trees).

Place your biggest, heaviest, meanest 'Mechs into Force Group 1. They'll be doing much of the work. Force Group 2 is almost an afterthought.

You've got nothing in the way of artillery support or Sensor Probes for this mission.

Strategy Blueprint

Your two Force Groups are dropped quite far from one another. Ignore Force Group 2 for now and concentrate on Force Group 1.

Guide Force Group 1 along the path indicated on the Battle Map, blasting trees as necessary (but holding back 'Mechs with ammo-intensive weapons so they don't waste any).

TIP *You need to hurry through this mission. Bear this in mind, and don't let your 'Mechs stand still for more than a moment.*

This path leads you up a small mountain, which reveals a *Thor* parked in a nearby grove of trees. Continue along your path until your forces are northwest of the *Thor,* then attack it with long-range weapons. It'll jump out to confront you, but you should be able to destroy it quickly with concentrated fire.

When the *Thor* is attacked the nearby *Mad Cat* will spring into action and will head for the land bridge leading to the base. Immediately after destroying the *Thor,* send your forces north toward the bridge so they can cut off the *Mad Cat* before it escapes into the base. Destroy it, too, with concentrated fire.

With both 'Mechs gone, send Force Group 1 into the base marked on the Battle Map. Have them quickly take over the Turret Control Tower inside, and prepare themselves for a pair of *Thors* that run down from the north. This will be a tough fight. Remember to keep your 'Mechs moving!

When these two *Thors* are gone, capture all salvageable buildings in the base and then quickly make use of the 'Mech Repair Bay. When your 'Mechs have been repaired, send them out the base's southwest gate and down the road as shown on the Battle Map.

They'll quickly reach a manmade bridge. Have all but one of your Force Group 1 'Mechs stop at the bridge while the fastest one crosses and continues south toward the powered-down *Hunchback IIcs* noted on the Battle Map.

As soon as the powered-down *Hunchbacks* start to power up, have your lone fast 'Mech turn around and run back across the bridge. From the other side of the bridge, hammer the *Hunchbacks* with long-range fire. If you're lucky, you'll be able to destroy one before it gets into Heavy Autocannon range, and destroy the other before it finishes off more than one of your 'Mechs.

Meanwhile, you should start moving Force Group 2 up from the south so that they can join Force Group 1. Their path should be clear because around this time the *Mad Cat* located south of the *Hunchbacks'* starting point will run up to engage Force Group 1.

Fig. 10-4. Avoid the explosive structures littering the area near the Masakari.

By the time the *Mad Cat* and *Hunchbacks* are finally destroyed, your Force Group 1 'Mechs are likely in bad shape. Quickly send them north to the 'Mech Repair Bay, having Force Group 2 meet them there.

When your 'Mechs are reasonably repaired, send them all north along the coastline path drawn on the Battle Map. Have your undamaged Force Group 2 'Mechs lead the way.

Eventually they'll reach the spot marked *"Masakari"* on the Battle Map. Here, a *Masakari* lurks amidst a field of Natural Gas Towers and other explosive structures. Destroy the *Masakari* with concentrated fire, taking great care to keep your 'Mechs away from explosive structures. If the *Masakari* gets too close to any explosive structures itself, shoot the structures to deal some quick, cheap damage.

Your mission ends when the *Masakari* goes down.

TIP *The sheer difficulty of the combat in this mission is a bit surprising, thanks mainly to the excellent pilots you're facing. Don't be surprised if a precise shot to the head or internal components takes out one of your 'Mechs quickly and forces you to start over.*

MISSION 5-3: CAPTURE FUEL DEPOT

The Jaguars have captured the Wiesman Fuel Depot and Processing Plant, which is located just a few kilometers away from the Starbase. Your task is to capture and defend the Depot, keeping at least two of its four oil derricks intact for Allied use.

Due to the Depot's great tactical significance, the Jaguars will stop at nothing to deny you this resource—even if it means destroying it.

The Depot is an extremely volatile and hazardous place for a battle. You can use this quality to your advantage, detonating nonessential structures that are close to your enemies, but you must take care not to let your enemies use this tactic. Also, be careful not to destroy oil derricks in this way.

- Destroy all enemy forces.
- Capture and defend all four oil derricks.
- Capture Clan HQ Building to gain valuable tactical data (secondary).

Overview

This is a brutal mission because the hard part isn't combat—it's anticipating when and where the enemy will try to sneak past your forces and destroy the oil derricks you've captured. Furthermore, the toughest part comes at the end, when you've been lulled into complacency by the relatively easy combat up to that point.

The essence of this mission is to slowly work your way around the Depot, capturing oil derricks as necessary and establishing a good defensive position in case of sneak attacks. The Strategy Blueprint tells you when and from where the attacks will come, but it's up to you to defend the derricks.

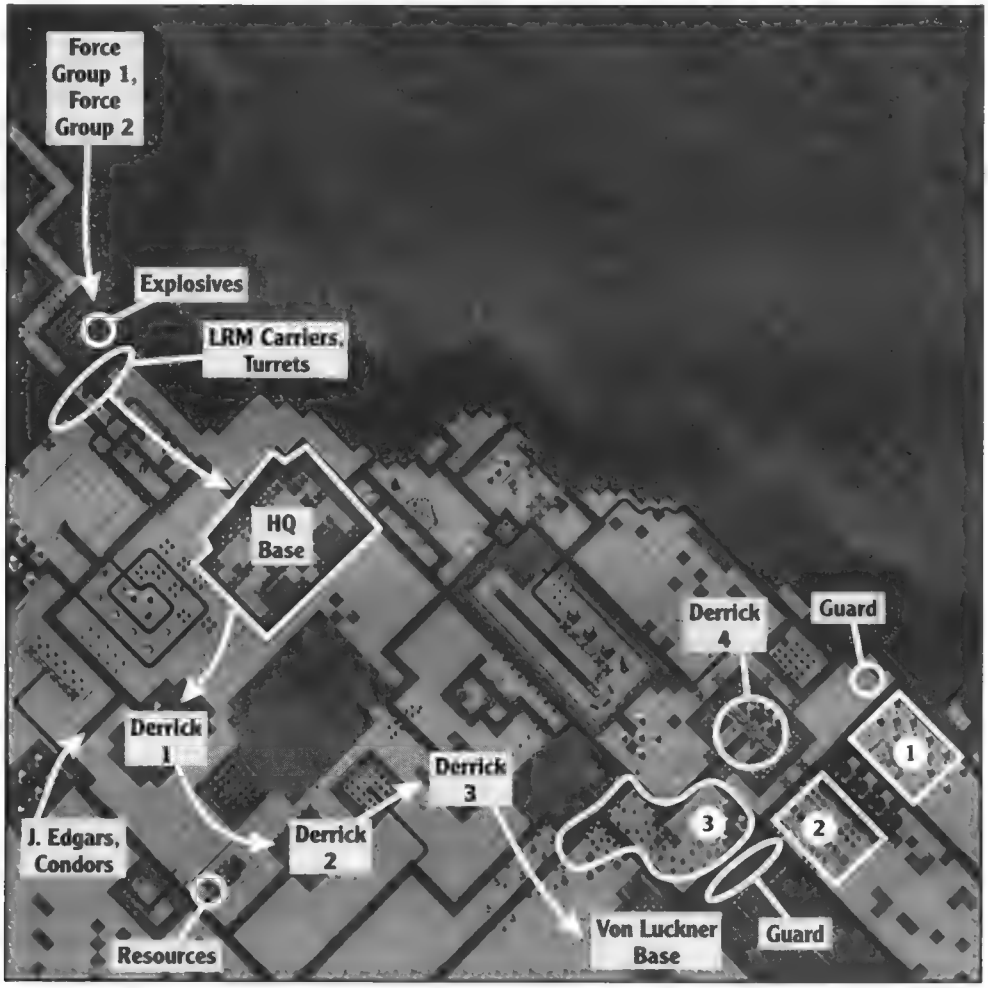
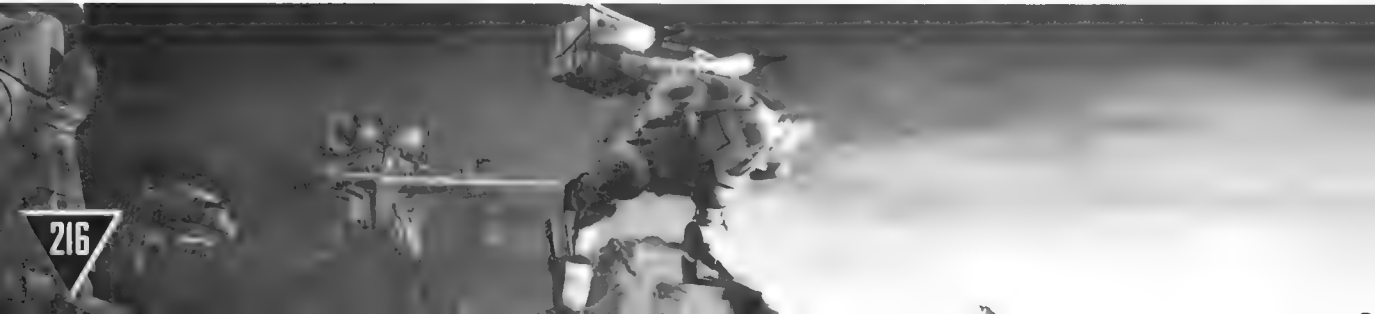


Fig. 10-5. Battle Map of Mission 5-3.



Recommended Forces

You're given 350 tons for this mission. It's a bad idea to take multiple slow 'Mechs, because in the mission's last stages you'll have to give chase to small, fast 'Mechs. A mix of fast and slow 'Mechs can work, but as always, large Clan 'Mechs are ideal because of their great mix of size and speed.

Long-range weapons are a good investment for this mission.

You have three small and three large artillery strikes for this mission.

Strategy Blueprint

Your forces are all dropped to the same area. Gather them and send them all south along the indicated path, destroying the explosive tanks at the spot marked "Explosives" on the Battle Map.

TIP *You should destroy those explosive tanks because your 'Mechs have to walk through that area, and you don't want them to detonate while your 'Mechs are nearby.*

Proceed to the spot marked "Turrets," where you'll find a concrete wall with Missile Turrets and three LRM Carriers behind it. Blast a hole in the wall from afar, then charge in and destroy the Turret Control Tower behind it. Then destroy the LRM Carriers.

Now proceed to the spot marked "HQ Base," taking the indicated path. This base is surrounded by heavy walls. Again, blast a hole in the walls from afar, then charge inside and take out the Turret Control Tower with a quick strike. There also are four *Von Luckner* tanks for you to destroy in this base.

Once all opposition has been crushed inside the base, capture the Base HQ, Sensor Control Building, and a pair of Resource Warehouses. Also capture a 'Mech Repair Bay and repair your 'Mechs thoroughly.

When your 'Mechs are repaired, proceed south to the spot marked Derrick 1. Destroy the pair of *Rommels* and the *Loki* that guard this derrick, then capture it. If you have one 'Mech that got particularly beat up by the *Loki* (and you probably do) send it back to the Repair Bay while leaving the other 'Mechs at Derrick 1.

A small flood of six *J. Edgars* and three *Condors* is now likely to emerge southwest of Derrick 1. You must intercept these vehicles before they reach Derrick 1 and detonate the Pressure Tanks surrounding it. The vehicles themselves have to pass through a cluster of explosive tanks to reach Derrick 1, and exploding these tanks will take out many of them simultaneously.

Now rejoin your repaired 'Mech with its companions and move all your 'Mechs briskly toward Derrick 2. Have them destroy the pair of *Von Luckners* guarding Derrick 2, capture the derrick, and quickly move on.

Proceed to Derrick 3 and destroy the three *Bulldogs* guarding it. Around this time a pair of *Hunchback IIcs* will appear from the east; stick around near Derrick 3 and intercept the *Hunchbacks,* destroying them with concentrated long-range fire.

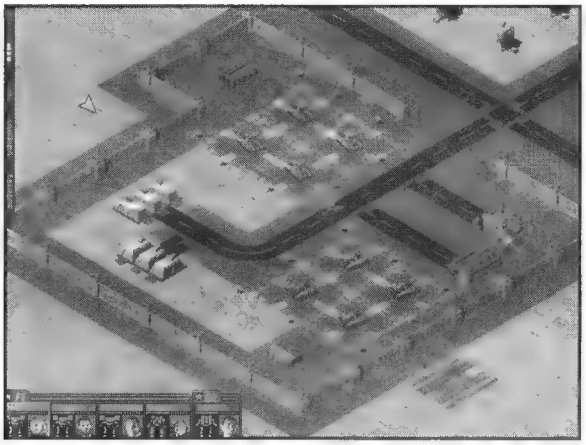


Fig. 10-6. The lower four Von Luckners **will activate no matter what you do. The upper four will remain dormant if you destroy the nearby Vehicle Barracks.**

When the *Hunchbacks* are gone, head south to the spot marked "*Von Luckner* Base."

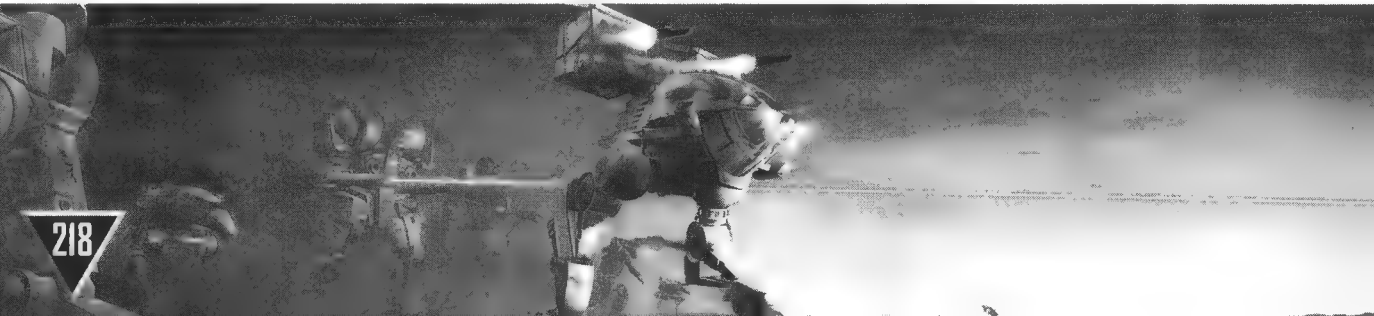
Have your 'Mechs blast a hole in the wall of this base, destroying the Vehicle Barracks as quickly as possible, and then destroying the *Uller* inside. Four of the parked *Von Luckner* tanks in this base will presently spring to life, but the other four will remain inactive if you destroyed the barracks quickly enough. Destroy any active vehicles.

Finally, send all your 'Mechs north toward Derrick 4. Have them rush the gate and destroy the pair of *Von Luckners* inside, then capture the Turret Control Tower and Gate Control Building.

Before capturing Derrick 4 itself, scout the area east of Derrick 4 thoroughly, revealing all terrain. Then, split your 'Mechs into two roughly equal groups: slow and fast (or just divide them equally if all your 'Mechs are fairly fast). Send the slow group to stand at the northern spot marked "Guard" on the Battle Map. Then, have the fast group capture Derrick 4 and quickly run down to the southern spot marked "Guard."

Two groups of enemy 'Mechs will appear from the east. A *Masakari* will approach your northern, slow 'Mechs, while a pair of *Commandos* and a trio of *Cougars* will approach your southern, fast 'Mechs.

The key to destroying these 'Mechs is detonating the explosive tanks near them; we've labeled spots 1, 2, and 3 on the Battle Map because they're significant patches of explosive tanks that the enemy 'Mechs will walk past. If you're fast and you time your attacks on the tanks properly, you can take out most of these newcomers with ease.



If any 'Mechs slip past you, give chase and use your artillery strikes to slow them down. You can't let them destroy your oil derricks! (Note that Derricks 1 and 2 are the most fragile, because they aren't protected by walls).

The mission is a success when you've finished off all newcomer 'Mechs.

TIP *If you failed, try again and attempt to move quicker. You may just have had bad luck catching that last group of 'Mechs—so next time, reveal more of the map before capturing the last derrick, so you can more readily see the positions of all the advancing 'Mechs.*

MISSION 5-4: POSITION ALLIED ARTILLERY

Our attack on the Starbase has entered its initial stages, and fire support is needed. Your task is to escort a number of Mobile Artillery pieces through the mountainous Lambert Valley region, and up to the designated spot atop a ridge.

The Jaguars have positioned Air Control Towers along this ridge, and these towers must be destroyed before the artillery approaches the area—or else air strikes will make your mission virtually impossible.

The Mobile Artillery can't fire during transit, so they'll be of no combat value during the mission.

You need to complete this mission in under 20 minutes.

- Destroy all three enemy Air Control Towers.
- Move all forces, including artillery pieces, to the top of the ridge.

Overview

This mission requires patience and a well-chosen set of 'Mechs. It also requires good surveillance of the surrounding area and a willingness to carefully micromanage your 'Mechs' path in case of rapid air strikes.

Assuming that you're patient and fairly adept at avoiding air strikes, this shouldn't be a backbreaking mission. The unfortunate thing about air strikes, though, is that they can dash your hopes in a matter of seconds. You'll have to exercise caution.

Recommended Forces

You've got 380 tons to play with. You can low-ball by 20 or 30 tons if you've got great 'Mechs and weapons.

Take speedy 'Mechs, because they've got to be able to evade air strikes. Ditch your slow Inner Sphere 'Mechs and *Masakaris* in favor of *Thors, Lokis, Cougars,* and the like.

As usual, ER-PPCs, PPCs and other long-range weapons are highly recommended.

You have no artillery strikes or support of any kind in this mission.

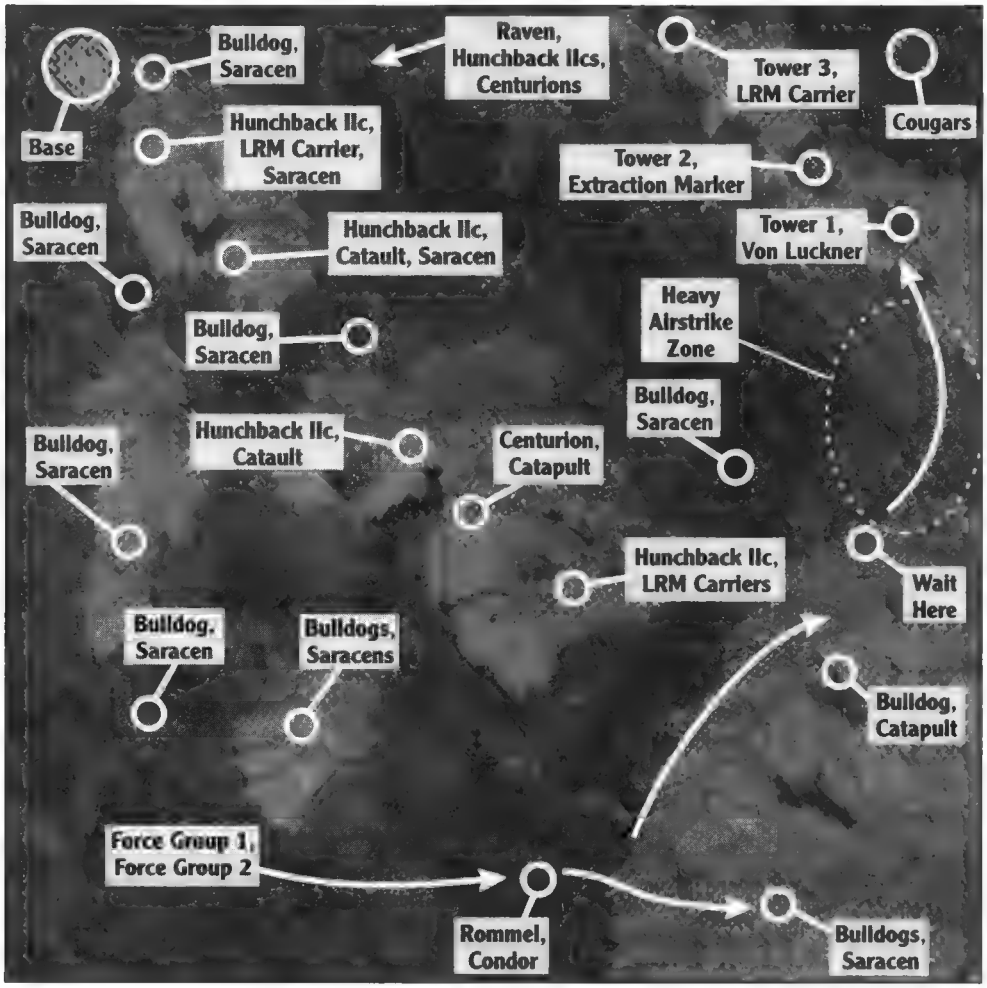
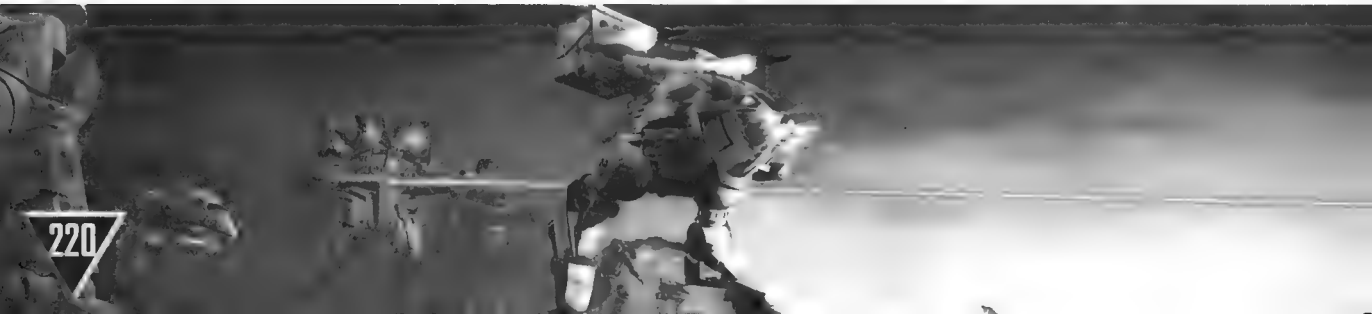


Fig. 10-7. Battle Map of Mission 5-4.



Strategy Blueprint

Your forces are all dropped to the same general area. Gather all your 'Mechs and assign them all to one group, and leave your Mobile Artillery in the other group. Send both groups due east toward the spot marked *"Rommel, Condor."*

TIP *Move quickly all throughout the mission, because in addition to the timer, there are enemy forces that will catch you from the rear if you aren't quick.*

Along the way, a pair of *Bulldogs* and a pair of *Saracens* might come down from the north and attack; destroy them with concentrated fire, then destroy the *Rommel* and the *Condor.*

Keep moving your forces east, up into the mountainous terrain, toward the spot labeled *"Bulldogs, Saracen."* Destroy the two *Bulldogs* and the *Saracen* located there, allowing your Mobile Artillery to lag behind somewhat.

Now have your 'Mechs veer north as shown on the Battle Map, leaving the Mobile Artillery well behind. As the 'Mechs proceed north, several groups of enemies marked on the Battle Map will mobilize and head toward them. These include the *Bulldog* and *Catapult* to the east, the *Hunchback IIc* and LRM Carriers to the west, and the *Centurion* and *Catapult* positioned even farther west. Take on all these foes as soon as they arrive, destroying them with concentrated fire.

When all enemies seem to be gone, send both 'Mechs and Mobile Artillery toward the spot marked "Wait Here." Then have the 'Mechs ascend the nearby mountains to view the surrounding terrain.

TIP *An enemy group including a* Raven, *two* Hunchback IIcs, *and two* Centurions *has been gradually looping around from the west, and eventually will catch up with your group. The first 'Mech to appear will be the* Raven; *the others will follow somewhat later.*

While your Mobile Artillery waits at the "Wait Here" spot, have your 'Mechs backtrack, searching for the enemy 'Mechs mentioned in the tip above. When they've destroyed all five 'Mechs, have them return to the "Wait Here" spot and then take off to the north as shown on the Battle Map. Leave the Mobile Artillery behind.

As the 'Mechs proceed north, they'll be pelted with air strikes. Keep a careful watch over them and steer them away from strike markers, always keeping them in motion. This is absolutely critical.

Eventually your forces will reach the spot labeled "Tower 1," which is the first Air Control Tower. It's guarded by six Pop-Up Missile Turrets and a *Von Luckner.* Furthermore, four *Cougars* hiding to the north are likely to jump down and attack when your 'Mechs approach.

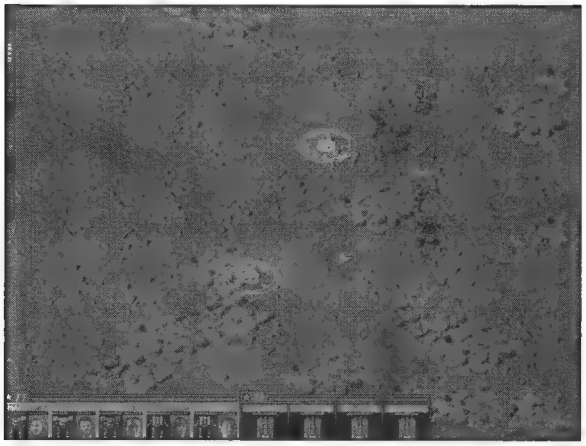


Fig. 10-8. Air strikes rain down on your 'Mechs as they cross this intermediate region. Keep a close eye on them and keep them moving.

Destroy the *Von Luckner* and enemy *Cougars* methodically, staying away from the Missile Turrets so they can't add to the damage. Continue to watch for air strikes as you fight.

When all enemies are destroyed, demolish the Air Control Tower and move on to Tower 2.

TIP *Stay away from the site of destroyed Air Control Towers, as they tend to get pummeled with extra air strikes.*

Tower 2 has another complement of Pop-Up Turrets, plus an LRM Carrier. Destroy all defenses, still watching for air strikes, and then destroy the Air Control Tower.

Finally, proceed to Tower 3, destroy the Turrets and LRM Carrier guarding it, and destroy the tower itself.

With the threat of air strikes gone, immediately send your Mobile Artillery toward the Extraction Point near the former site of Tower 2. Have your 'Mechs backtrack and escort them.

TIP *Another group of roving 'Mechs emerges from the base in the northwest corner of the map around the 12-minute mark. These Mechs include a* Raven, *two* Centurions, *and a* Hunchback IIc. *Like the previous roving group, this group will loop around and follow the same path your forces followed.*

If you were fast, none of these 'Mechs will catch your Mobile Artillery from the rear. If you were slow, the Raven *will catch up and you'll have to bring your 'Mechs down to deal with it. Only if you were horrendously slow will the* Centurions *or* Hunchback *catch your artillery.*

When all 'Mechs and artillery are huddled around the Extraction Point, the mission is considered a success.

MISSION 5-5: DESTROY SECONDARY POWER

The Bellum area contains three power stations, designated Alpha, Beta, and Gamma, that provide secondary energy to the Starbase. If the Power Generators in these stations were to be destroyed, the Starbase's defense grid would be forced to operate solely on local power, which would reduce the overall efficiency of the Starbase's automated Turrets and sensor grid.

The area is well defended by Bondsman vehicles, plus a scattering of Clan and Bondsman 'Mechs. Also, an elite Star of Clan OmniMechs reportedly guards this area, and will no doubt provide a serious challenge: It's reported to contain multiple *Masakaris*.

- Destroy Power Complex Alpha
- Destroy Power Complex Beta
- Destroy Power Complex Gamma

Overview

This is a mission that requires you to tiptoe around potential trouble spots instead of charging in to attack. Specifically, the biggest threat to the health of your mission is a large group of *Masakaris* stationed in a base near the center of the map. If you attempt to storm this base right away you're just asking for trouble, but if you avoid it the *Masakaris* will emerge gradually so you don't have to fight them all at once. Also, you can make your job much easier by fighting the *Masakaris* with environmental effects (such as explosive tanks and Turrets).

Once you've taken care of all the *Masakaris,* you'll know you're past the difficult part of the mission. But dealing with these heavy monstrosities is easier said than done.

Recommended Forces

You have 415 tons of drop weight, and as usual it's difficult enough to win *with* all that weight—so don't try to low-ball by too much.

Also as usual, avoid *Atlases* altogether and try to steer clear of sluggish Inner Sphere 'Mechs. By now, you should have a wide variety of superior Clan OmniMech designs to choose from, so you can take along big 'Mechs without having to sacrifice speed.

The usual array of ER-PPCs, LRMs, Large Lasers, and other heavy-hitting weapons are in order.

You've got six small and four large artillery strikes for this mission.

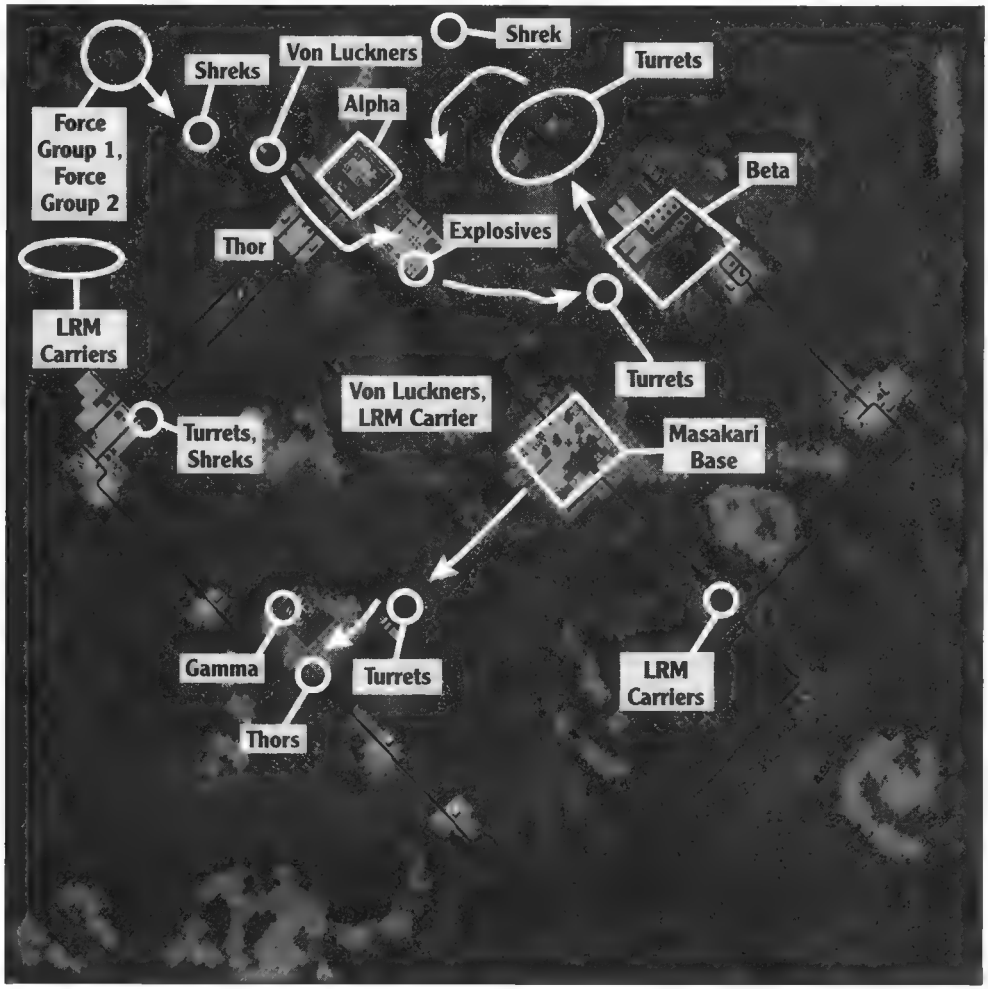
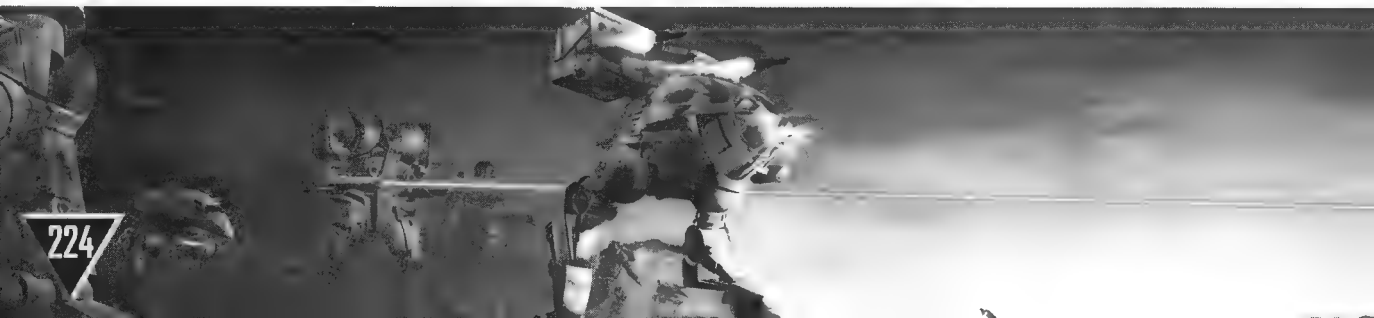


Fig. 10-9. Battle Map of Mission 5-5.



Strategy Blueprint

Your forces are dropped in the northwest corner of the map. Gather them into a single group and send them southeast toward the *Shreks* indicated on the Battle Map. Have them destroy the three *Shreks* they find here with concentrated fire, meanwhile gradually advancing.

As they continue, the trio of *Von Luckners* noted on the map also will attack, along with a *Thor.* Destroy these enemies methodically, sending any damaged 'Mechs to the rear.

When the *Thors* and *Von Luckners* are gone, have your 'Mechs run *past* the Alpha site, pausing only to capture the Sensor Control Building (that's right, ignore the Power Generators for now) and dash down to the spot marked "Explosives" on your map. There you'll find a line of Gas Tanks and Pressure Tanks. When these tanks are revealed, have all your 'Mechs backtrack and gather slightly to the north of the tanks (outside their explosive radius).

Soon, two *Masakaris* will come up from the *Masakari* base. As they approach, they'll walk right past these tanks. Detonate the tanks either with weapons fire or a small artillery strike, and you should be able to destroy (or nearly destroy) both of them.

Now return to the Alpha site and destroy all three Power Generators. Also, capture all the valuable structures located near the spot marked "Explosives." You'll claim lots of salvage there.

When you're done, proceed east along the indicated path, sticking to the northern coastline. An LRM Carrier and a pair of *Von Luckners* will attack from the south; destroy them and keep on moving.

Soon you'll reach a bridge. Gather your forces south of the bridge and then rush across it, destroying two Cannon Turrets on the other side. Then charge right into the area marked Beta and look for two structures labeled MechWarrior Barracks. Destroy these buildings as quickly as possible. Then concentrate on the nearby LRM Carriers.

TIP *Ten unmanned* Ullers *are parked in this base. If you destroy both MechWarrior Barracks quickly, only two or three of these 'Mechs will actually become active.*

When all nearby opposition is gone, destroy the bridge your forces just crossed.

Now send your least-damaged 'Mechs west toward the large area labeled "Turrets." Here you'll find a vast field of Missile Turrets and a pair of Turret Control Towers. Capture the Towers quickly, before your 'Mechs are hit with too many missiles.

TIP *Meanwhile, a trio of* Masakaris *is heading north from the* Masakari *base. Since you destroyed the bridge they wanted to cross, they'll have to loop around and approach your forces from the west—and they'll get pounded by the Missile Turrets you just captured.*

Fig. 10-10. Capture the Turret Control Towers, and you'll claim a vast number of Missile Turrets.

Now have your 'Mechs repair themselves in the Beta site's two 'Mech Repair Bays. Also destroy the nearby Power Generators.

When you've done all there is to do here, approach the captured Missile Turrets and see how badly they've damaged the attacking *Masakaris.* If you hang back and let the Turrets do all the work, they'll destroy all three *Masakaris*..

When the *Masakaris* are destroyed, send your 'Mechs northwest through the Missile Turrets, then south toward the Alpha site, then east toward the *Masakari* base, which now contains only three *Masakaris* and four LRM Carriers. It's also guarded by a few Cannon Turrets.

Attack this base from the west. In the base's western corner are numerous fuel tanks that you can detonate—and hopefully damage a *Masakari* or two. If this trick fails, you can still use your numerous artillery strikes to help destroy the *Masakaris.* Don't hold back!

When all base defenses are gone, enter the *Masakari* base and capture all structures containing salvage. Then capture a few 'Mech Repair Bays (the base is packed with them) and get your 'Mechs back into fighting shape.

From here, send your 'Mechs south toward the Gamma site. After crossing a bridge, they'll have to destroy a pair of Cannon Turrets and a pair of *Thors.*

When the *Thors* are gone, have your 'Mechs approach the Gamma site. This site is surrounded by Cannon Turrets. Pick off the Turrets at long range, blast a hole in the

wall, and destroy the Power Generators located inside. The mission is a success when the last Generator is destroyed.

TIP *The main key to this mission lies in timing: You need to destroy explosive tanks at the right moment to take out* Masakaris, *and you need to hurry to destroy the MechWarrior Barracks before too many* Ullers *can power up. If you succeed on both counts, this mission isn't terribly difficult.*

MISSION 5-6: CAPTURE STARBASE

This is it: The culmination of all your previous efforts. Your mission is to destroy the six Mobile Orbital Guns defending the Starbase, thus paving the way for the primary invasion force.

The Starbase's outer Turret ring has been temporarily disabled by your previous actions, but it'll come back on-line within a minute of your drop. If you hurry, you might be able to capture the temporary Turret Control Towers controlling these Turrets before power is restored.

Also, because this is a prelude to the definitive battle for control of Port Arthur, the Jaguars will throw everything they've got at you. In addition to the current defenders, intelligence reports a group of *Thor* OmniMechs approaching the base from the south. If you hurry you might be able to ambush them before they reinforce the Starbase.

This is your final mission, so hold nothing back. Send your best pilots and your best 'Mechs, outfitted with your best weapons. Even if you throw everything you've got at the Jaguars, you're in for a difficult fight.

Your mission must be completed within 35 minutes.

- Destroy center Mobile Orbital Guns.
- Destroy northwest Mobile Orbital Guns.
- Destroy northeast Mobile Orbital Guns.
- Capture or neutralize perimeter Turrets (secondary).

Overview

This is the final mission, and the Jaguars have overwhelming forces guarding the Starbase—but you don't need to feel overwhelmed. The Strategy Blueprint shows you how to avoid many of the worst enemies, and let automated defenses such as Turrets take care of others.

The first minute of this mission is a mad race against the clock, but after that the pace relaxes. You should have no difficulty performing the mission in less than 35 minutes—because combat is the real challenge, not time.

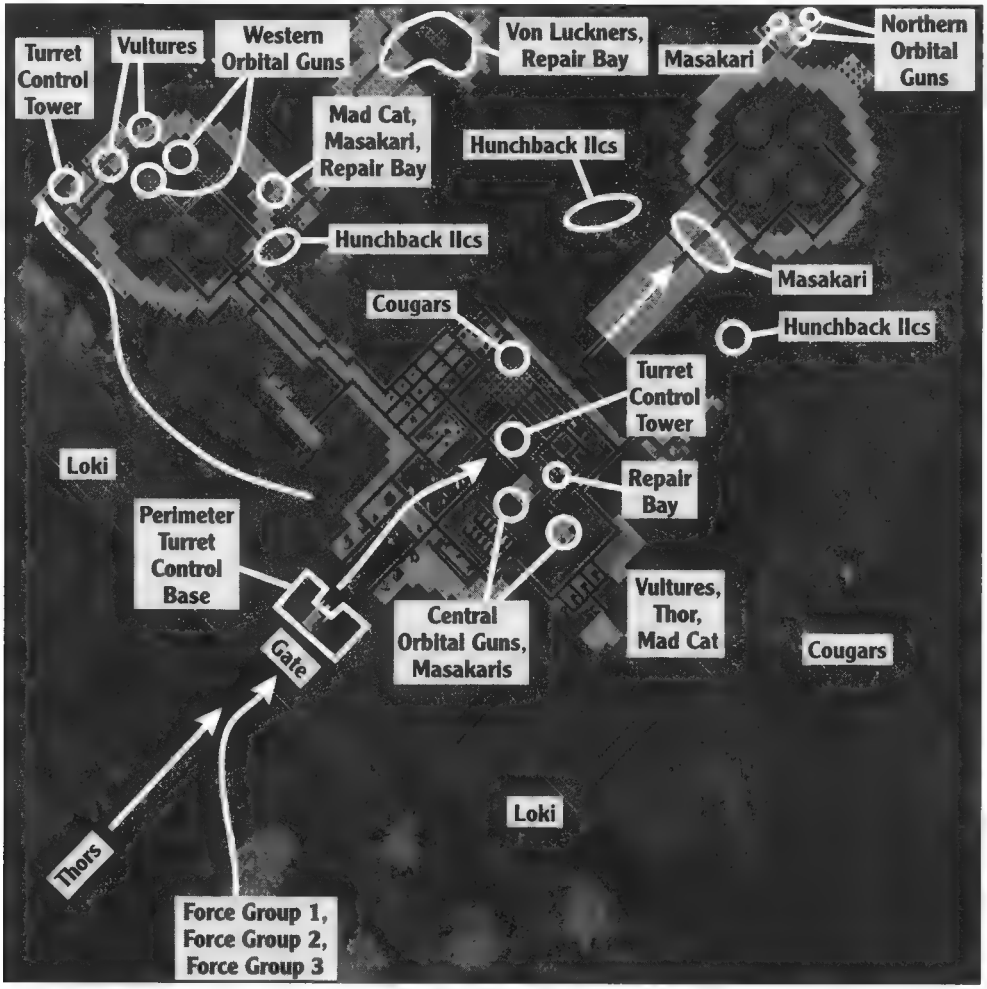
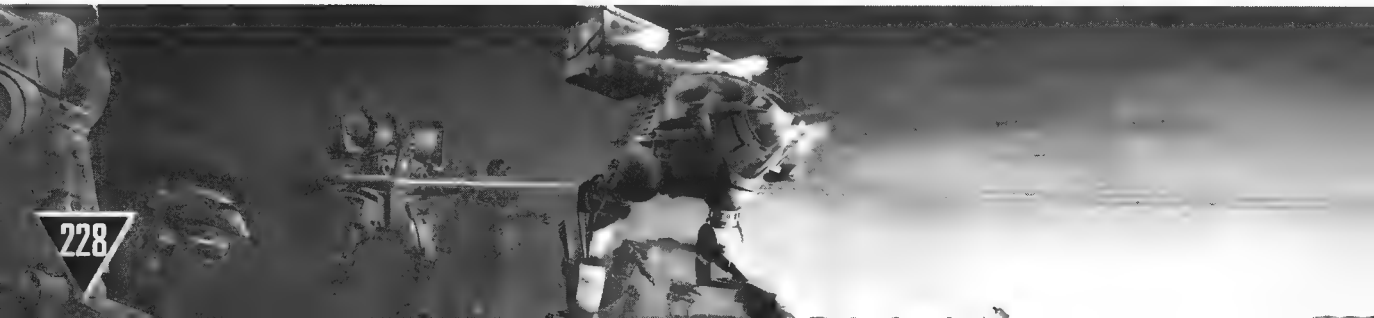


Fig. 10-11. Battle Map of Mission 5-6.



Recommended Forces

You've got a massive 600 tons for this final mission. By now you should have built up a large collection of heavy Clan 'Mechs and impressive Clan weaponry. Ideally you should send *Masakaris, Mad Cats, Thors, Lokis,* and *Vultures* on this mission, all loaded with high-powered Clan and Inner Sphere weapons.

In addition to these heavier 'Mechs, you need to send one lighter, jump-capable 'Mech with a Guardian ECM Suite or Clan ECM Suite loaded onto it. Ideally, this 'Mech should be a *Cougar.* Make sure a pilot with good Jumping skill is in control of it.

You have three small and three large artillery strikes for this mission, plus two Sensor Probes.

Strategy Blueprint

All three Force Groups are dropped to the same spot. Immediately select your lone small, jump-capable 'Mech (we'll assume that it's a *Cougar*) and have it sprint along the path drawn on the Battle Map, all the way to the spot marked "Gate." (Leave the other 'Mechs behind for now.)

TIP *You can't waste any time getting your jump-capable* Cougar *into the base, because you have exactly one minute before the base's perimeter Turrets are activated. You'll need to start over if your* Cougar *is too slow and gets destroyed.*

Have your *Cougar* jump over the gate, then jump over the wall protecting the Perimeter Turret Control Base, which is marked on your Battle Map.

The instant your *Cougar* gets inside that base, have it take over the three Turret Control Towers located side by side in there. Also have it take over the Gate Control Building.

At the 34-minute mark (one minute after the mission started), the Missile Turrets guarding the Starbase's perimeter activate. A few moments later, the group of four *Thors* marching up from the south will reach the gate and get attacked by those Turrets. Allow the Missile Turrets to completely destroy all four *Thors.*

Fig. 10-12. This is the Perimeter Turret Control Base. Take over all three Turret Control Towers, but don't destroy the Power Generator.

When the *Thors* are gone, march your remaining 'Mechs up to the gate and have them walk through it to rejoin the *Cougar.*

TIP *Make sure your forces walk along the road as they enter the Starbase. If they stray too far to either side they'll have trouble, because the ground outside the Starbase's walls is littered with mines. The road itself, however, has no mines.*

Now that your forces are inside the Starbase, have them approach the Turret Control Tower located near the center of the map, taking the path drawn on the Battle Map.

As your forces approach this Turret Control Tower, which is located near the mouth of an area that's blanketed with Missile Turrets, a trio of *Cougars* is likely to attack from the north. Have most of your forces fight the *Cougars* while your own jump-capable *Cougar* jumps over the walls protecting the Turret Control Tower and captures it.

TIP *Above all else, be sure to capture that Turret Control Tower as soon as possible! A pair of* Masakaris *guarding the nearby Orbital Guns will attack your forces as they approach the tower, but by capturing the tower immediately you'll assume control of a great number of Missile Turrets. These Missile Turrets will shred the* Masakaris *before they can get close enough to your forces to deal damage.*

After the *Cougars* and *Masakaris* are gone, capture the 'Mech Repair Bay located slightly east of the Turret Control Tower. Repair all your 'Mechs. Then attack the two nearby Orbital Guns.

As you attack the Orbital Guns, a group of enemy 'Mechs stationed to the southeast attacks. This group includes two *Vultures,* a *Thor,* and a *Mad Cat.* Keep your forces in the midst of your newly captured Missile Turrets as you fight these 'Mechs, and the Missile Turrets will help you win.

Repair your 'Mechs again after this fight, and make sure you destroyed both central Orbital Guns. Now return to the vicinity of the Perimeter Turret Control Base, then approach the western edge of the Starbase, taking the path outlined on the Battle

Map. This path takes your 'Mechs past a long line of Missile Turrets protected by concrete walls; ignore the Turrets and dash madly toward the Turret Control Tower and *Vultures* at the extreme western edge of the Starbase.

Capture or destroy the Turret Control Tower as quickly as possible, either by jumping your *Cougar* over the wall for a quick capture or by breaking through the wall and then taking the tower. After dealing with the tower, destroy the swarm of five *Vultures* that jumps down to attack.

Now break through the walls protecting the nearby western Orbital Guns and destroy the guns themselves, taking care to stay well out of the sensor range of the *Hunchback IIcs, Mad Cat,* and *Masakari* stationed due east of the western Orbital Guns.

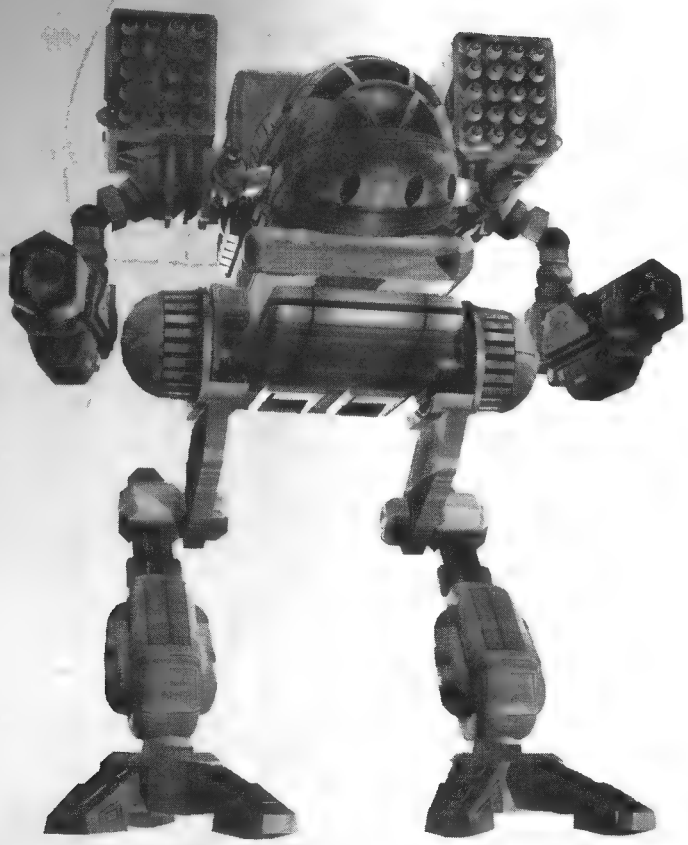
When both western Orbital Guns are destroyed, backtrack to the Perimeter Turret Control Base along the same path you took west. Then, from the Perimeter Turret Control Base, return to the Repair Bay near the central Orbital Guns for fresh repairs.

When all of your 'Mechs are repaired, you're ready to make a run on the northern Orbital Guns. Send your 'Mechs northeast along the path drawn on the Battle Map, past the *Masakaris* guarding the way, all the way up to the northern Orbital Guns themselves.

As your 'Mechs run past the *Masakaris,* five jump-capable *Hunchback IIcs* will leap over to attack. Ignore the *Masakaris* and the *Hunchbacks.* Both 'Mech types are slow; you'll probably lose a 'Mech as you dash past these enemies, but that's not a big deal at this point. All you want to do right now is reach those last two Orbital Guns!

When a few of your 'Mechs reach the northern Orbital Guns, immediately target each Orbital Gun with a large artillery strike and a small artillery strike. Then have all your 'Mechs take evasive action from the pursuing *Masakaris* and *Hunchback IIcs.* When the artillery strikes hit, they'll destroy both Orbital Guns, and the mission is a success.

Congratulations! You've won the campaign and freed Port Arthur. Kick back and watch the endgame cinema.



CHAPTER 11

DESPERATE MEASURES OPERATION 1: HYDRA

The Smoke Jaguars have been largely obliterated, but a renegade Star Colonel, Marcus Kotare, has established an outpost on the old Star League planet of Cermak. What he intends to achieve there is unknown, though the planet's Star League past suggests that he may be searching for long-forgotten technologies. Your task is to discover what Kotare is up to on Cermak, and to stop him.

This first set of missions is surprisingly challenging. To succeed, you'll need to use sound combat tactics and make good use of your salvage.

MISSION I-1: SECURE LANDING ZONE

Your first mission is relatively simple. Your task is to clear the area around your initial drop point, capture an HQ Vehicle, then capture a pair of Smoke Jaguar Component Warehouses. When you've completed these objectives, you should move your forces to the Extraction Point.

Capturing an HQ Vehicle typically reveals part of the map, and this mission is no exception. If you accomplish your objectives in the order presented here, you should have relatively little difficulty in completing the mission.

Your objectives are as follows:

- Capture HQ Vehicle (Primary)
- Capture Component Warehouses (2) (Primary)
- Move all units to Extraction Point (Primary)

Overview

As mentioned before, this is a relatively easy introductory mission, especially if you take your three heaviest 'Mechs and load them up with potent weapons.

The strategy recommended in the Strategy Blueprint takes you all over the map, and instructs you to capture all possible salvage. It's important to claim as much quality salvage as possible in these early missions because it will make your later missions easier.

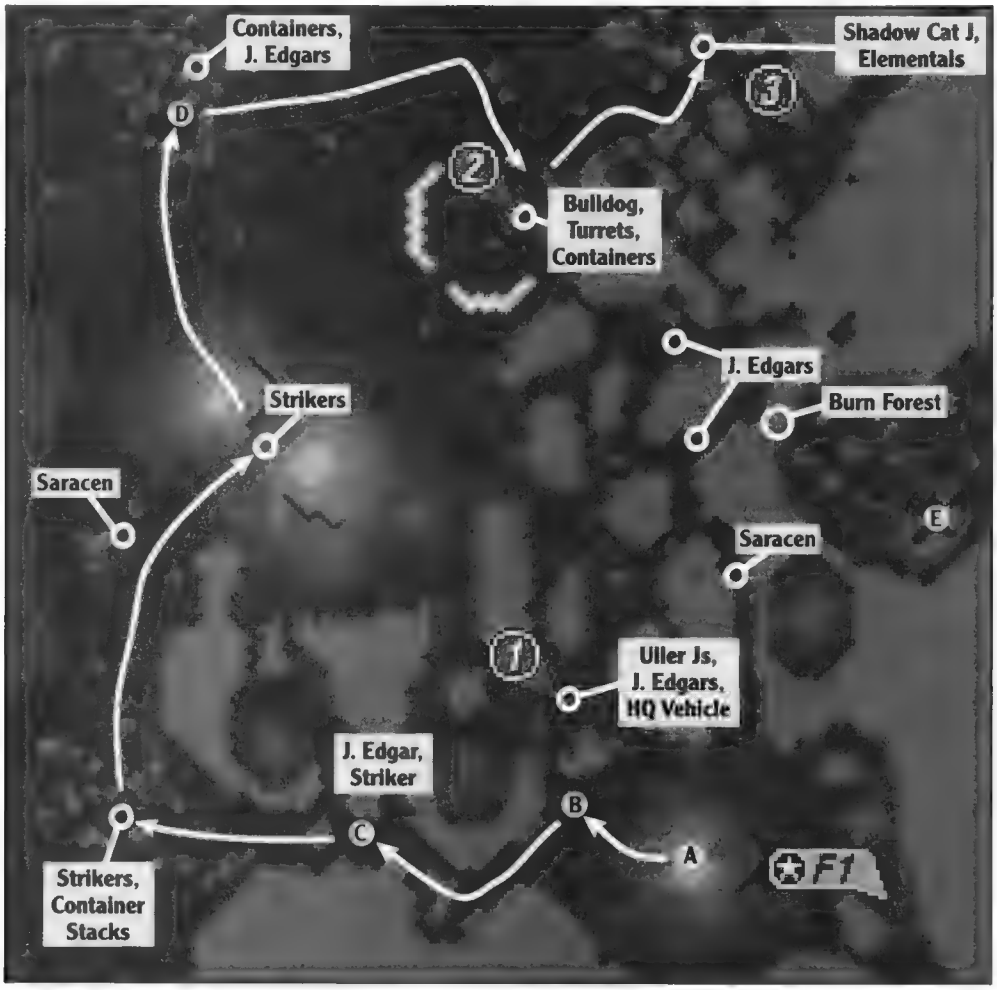
Salvage includes:

- Southwest Container Stacks: 4 Clan LRM Racks, 3 Heavy Flamers
- Point D Container Stacks: 3 Clan Pulse Lasers, 1 ECM
- Point 2 Component Warehouses: 2 Clan LB-X Autocannons, 2 Clan Large Pulse Lasers, 6 Clan ER Lasers, 4 Clan Streak SRM Packs
- Point E Component Vault: 2 Heavy Thunderbolts

Recommended Forces

You're allotted 180 tons of drop weight, plus four Small Artillery Strikes for this mission.

Take your *Jagermech, Centurion,* and *Bushwhacker.* Remove some of their ammo-dependent weapons and replace them with larger energy weapons. For example, replace Light Autocannons with PPCs and Heavy Flamers. Don't buy weapons at this stage; just use what you've got.



Battle Map of Mission 1-1

NOTE Later in the game, we'll recommend specializing in particular ranges—for example, we'll recommend loading your 'Mechs with long-range weapons and then fighting exclusively at that range.

Right now, however, your 'Mechs are big and slow, and you don't have the resources to get faster ones. With slow 'Mechs, you'll find yourself fighting at fairly close range whether you want to or not, simply because your 'Mechs aren't fast enough to separate from the enemy. So feel free to take short-range weapons like Heavy Flamers for this mission, in addition to PPCs and Autocannons.

Strategy Blueprint

Your forces start at the point labeled F1 on the Battle Map. Immediately gather them and proceed west to Point A, the top of a hill. Walking up here reveals lots of nearby terrain (Figure 11-1).

Figure 11-1. Walking up the hill reveals the HQ Vehicle and assorted enemies near Point 1.

Follow the path on the Battle Map that leads west toward Point B. As you approach Point B, *J. Edgars* and *Uller Js* approach from the vicinity of Point 1. Retreat slightly while fighting these enemies, targeting the *Uller Js* first.

TIP *As you fight these enemies, the HQ Vehicle stationed at Point 1 flees to the west, accompanied by a* Shadow Cat. *Don't worry; you'll catch up with it later.*

With these enemies gone, go west along the designated path toward Point C. Near Point C, you're likely to run into a *Striker* and a *J. Edgar,* and you also might encounter the fleeing HQ Vehicle and *Shadow Cat.* Destroy all combat vehicles, but don't worry about the fleeing HQ Vehicle. Capture it if the opportunity is there, but otherwise just ignore it for now.

When all foes at Point C have been dispatched, proceed west along the designated path toward the spot labeled *Strikers,* Container Stacks. You'll encounter a pair of *Strikers* here, plus the HQ Vehicle (if you didn't capture it earlier).

Destroy the *Strikers* and capture the HQ Vehicle if you didn't do so earlier. Locate a pair of Container Stacks nearby, and take them for salvage.

Now proceed north along the designated path, toward the spot marked *Strikers.* (Along the way you'll encounter a *Saracen.*) The path leads you to a hilltop with a pair of *Strikers* atop it. Destroy the *Strikers* and make sure that you explore the hilltop; you'll reveal a good deal of the surrounding terrain from up here.

After scouting the terrain, follow the path that leads north to Point D. At Point D, you'll encounter a trio of *J. Edgars.* Destroy all three, and capture a pair of Container Stacks nearby.

Figure 11-2. The Bulldog in the upper left of the screen is your main threat at the Point 2 base.

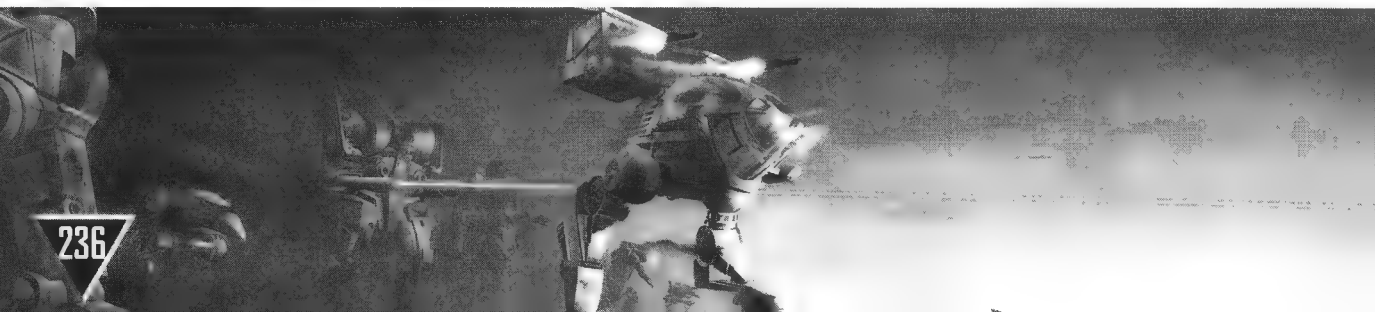
At this point, you're ready to attack the base at Point 2. Follow the path on the Battle Map; it sends you into the base from the north, where there are no Turrets. Immediately take out the single *Bulldog* parked inside the base (Figure 11-2).

TIP *You can use your Small Artillery Strikes to soften up the* Bulldog *before initiating combat; you won't have much use for the strikes otherwise.*

After taking out the *Bulldog,* you should either have your *Bushwhacker* run in and capture one Turret Control Tower, then destroy the other from a distance; or have all of your 'Mechs destroy *both* Turret Control Towers from a distance. The first method is probably better, as your newly captured Cannon Turrets will obliterate a second *Bulldog* parked just south of the base. Either way, you should neutralize all Turrets and the second *Bulldog.*

TIP *There are various non-combatant vehicles scattered around the Point 2 base. You can ignore these; they're not mission-critical.*

When all threats are neutralized, capture both Component Warehouses in the middle of the Point 2 base.



At this point, you're almost ready to exit the mission. Follow the path that leads northeast from here, terminating in a spot labeled *Shadow Cat J,* Elementals. When you reach this point you'll encounter—not surprisingly—a *Shadow Cat J* and several Elementals (Figure 11-3). Destroy the *Shadow Cat* first, remembering to stay on the move as you fight, and then pick off the Elementals.

Figure 11-3. As you approach the Extraction Point marker, this Shadow Cat **and several Elementals intercept you.**

You now have a clear shot at the Extraction Point at Point 3, but you should hold off for a moment. Are your 'Mechs so heavily damaged that you wouldn't risk fighting a couple more vehicles? If so, send them directly to Point 3 to end the mission.

If your 'Mechs *aren't* on the absolute brink of falling apart, we recommend that you avoid Point 3 for now and instead proceed southeast, through the forest, to the spot labeled Burn Forest. You'll have to fight a pair of *J. Edgars* on your way, but that shouldn't be tough. At the spot labeled Burn Forest, you should attack the forest and burn it away until your 'Mechs can cross. Then move to Point E and capture the Component Vault there.

Now that you've cleared all the salvage from this map, go north and assemble your 'Mechs at Point 3. The mission ends successfully.

MISSION 1-2: PROTECT BASE NOMAD

This mission requires you to defend a long-abandoned base. This base has functioning Turrets, plus a Sensor Control Building that allows you to detect enemies well before they reach your base.

Despite that fact that your forces start out in the base they must defend, there are definite rewards for leaving the base at the appropriate times. We'll cover that in the Strategy Blueprint.

Your objectives are as follows:

- Defend Base Headquarters (Primary)
- Defend local Turret power (Secondary)
- Defend Sensor Control Building (Secondary)

Overview

This mission requires you to maneuver two separate groups of 'Mechs at once, and it also requires you to move quickly at times. The easiest way to manage this is to occasionally pause the game while you switch between groups and assign new orders. If you don't do this, the mission can be quite difficult.

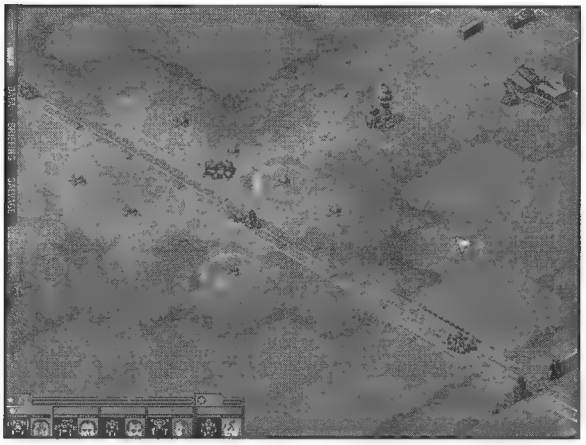
This map contains the following salvage:

- Point B Container Stack: 5 Clan LRM Racks
- Point C Container Stack: 1 Clan Heavy LB-X Autocannon
- Point D Component Vault: 2 Large X-Pulse Lasers

Recommended Forces

You have 245 tons to work with, as well as three Small Artillery Strikes and one Large Artillery Strike. Take the five 'Mechs you started the game with, substituting in any Smoke Jaguar 'Mechs you were lucky enough to capture in the last mission.

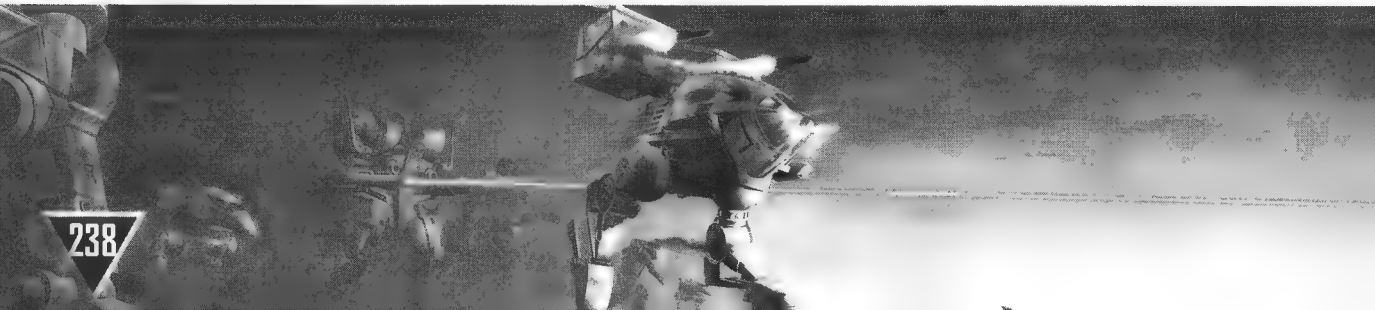
Use heavy mid-range weapons, like the Clan LB-X Autocannons and Heavy Thunderbolts you should have salvaged in the last mission. Use Clan weapons whenever possible, and heavy-hitting weapons whenever possible. You'll have a Repair Bay in this mission, so ammo isn't a problem.

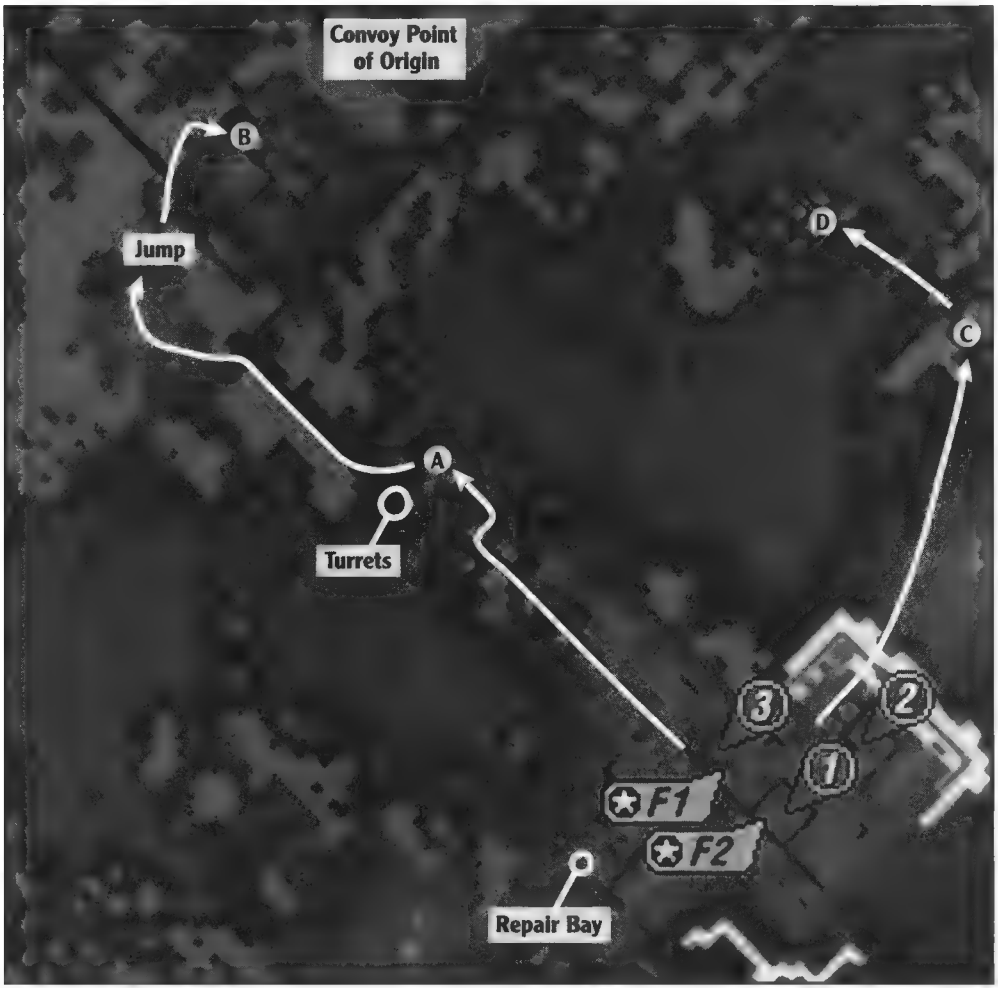


Strategy Blueprint

Your forces start out in a large, sprawling base in the southeast corner of the map. Immediately select your *Commando J* and have it proceed at full speed, alone, along the path to Point A. Note that following this path requires you to jump across a short stretch of water rather than cross the bridge. (You do this to avoid Turret fire.)

Figure 11-4. By jumping across the water instead of taking the bridge, you can capture the Turret Control Tower without sustaining much damage.





Battle Map of Mission 1-2

TIP *You can't waste a second during these early stages. Make sure the* Commando *keeps moving at all times!*

At Point A, capture a Turret Control Tower (Figure 11-4) and continue to follow the path drawn on the Battle Map. It leads you off the road and atop a hill, which gives you a view of the surrounding area.

Jump across a section of forest at the spot marked Jump, then loop around the back of the small base at Point B. Jump over the wall and capture the Heavy Turret Control Tower inside the base, as well as the Container Stack next to it.

As soon as you capture the Heavy Turret Control Tower, the base's Missile Turrets attack Column 1, which is on the road to the southeast. Ignore the Column; let the

missiles soften it up. Have the *Commando* jump back across the wall and retrace its steps all the way back to the starting point (F2).

TIP *Your* Commando *may be pursued by* Ullers *as it backtracks, but the* Ullers *will be stopped short by the Turrets near Point A. If the* Ullers *start firing on the Turret Control Tower near Point A, you might want to drop one of your Small Artillery Strikes on them.*

When your *Commando* returns to the base, move it into the Repair Bay in the southwest corner of the base.

Meanwhile, the remnants of Column 1 (which originally consisted of two *Harassers,* two *Manticores,* two *Saracens,* and four *Ullers*) will attack your base. The vehicles are likely to approach via the bridge near Point A, while the *Ullers* tend to loop to the south and attack near the Repair Bay. Position your main 'Mech group halfway between the Repair Bay and the base's northwestern entrance, and move them to intercept whichever group of enemies arrives first. When one group has been destroyed, go catch the other.

TIP *If both groups attack simultaneously, the* Ullers *should be intercepted. They're the ones most likely to break into the base and start attacking the HQ Building.*

The best place to fight is inside the base walls, where the Turrets can fully support you. If the Ullers *stand well outside the base and pick away at the Turrets, go attack them and then retreat after you've got their attention, luring them in to fight amongst the Turrets.*

The HQ Building is pretty tough, but you want to keep this enemy Column from attacking it so that it can withstand the punishment doled out by the second and third enemy Columns.

When this Column is defeated, have your 'Mechs repair themselves in the Repair Bay. Meanwhile have the *Commando* run to the northeast part of the base, jump over the northern wall, and follow the path on the Battle Map that leads to Point C.

Have the *Commando* capture the Container Stack at Point C, then proceed to Point D. He'll need to jump across the water to do so. Have him run past the two Pop-Up

Turrets on the other side of the water, ignoring them, and then capture the Component Vault at Point D (Figure 11-5). Finally, have him backtrack all the way to the Repair Bay for repairs. Don't let him fight the Pop-Up Turrets.

Meanwhile, your other 'Mechs should be fully repaired.

Eventually, the second Column appears from the north. It includes a pair of *Ullers,* a *Cougar,* and a pair of Aerospace Spotters. Like the first group, it splits and attacks in two sections—very likely, one from the west and one from the south.

Figure 11-5. Have your Commando **capture this Component Vault.**

Again, position your main 'Mech group halfway between the Repair Bay and the base's northwest entrance, and intercept whichever group of enemies decides to attack first. Then take on the remainder of the Column.

When this wave is gone, repair your 'Mechs (Figure 11-6).

Figure 11-6. Frequent stops at the Repair Bay improve your chances of success.

A lone *Cougar* approaches from the vicinity of Point D. If left unchallenged, it will halt for a while before approaching the base along the same path your *Commando* took when it visited Point D. As soon as this *Cougar* appears, however, you should have your *Commando* jump over the northern wall and run just far enough toward it to get its attention. Move quickly!

As soon as the *Cougar* moves to attack the *Commando,* have the *Commando* retreat to the base and jump back over the northern wall. Gather your other 'Mechs here. The *Cougar* will chase the *Commando* all the way inside the base, where you can quickly destroy it with concentrated fire.

As you destroy the *Cougar,* you'll see the third and final Column start to approach from the northwest. Repair your 'Mechs and gather them near the center of the base—by the HQ Building.

This last Column consists of a pair of *Cougars* and a *Mad Cat.* It will probably split up; the *Mad Cat* may approach from the north, where that last *Cougar* just came

from. Whatever the case, have all your 'Mechs stand ready near the HQ Building. Have them move to attack whichever enemies get inside the base first. If all 'Mechs arrive more or less simultaneously, the *Mad Cat* must be targeted first.

You should be able to destroy these three foes if you use concentrated fire and if you remember to move particularly damaged 'Mechs to the rear, where they'll take less damage.

The mission is a success when these three 'Mechs are destroyed.

Mission 1-3: Secure Baitan Sector

This mission requires you to attack a Smoke Jaguar base that's essentially three mini-bases placed adjacent to one another. Each mini-base contains a Base Headquarters and other important structures. You may choose either to take over two Base Headquarters and ignore the third, or capture all three to complete a secondary objective. The walkthrough in the Strategy Blueprint gives you the option to play it either way.

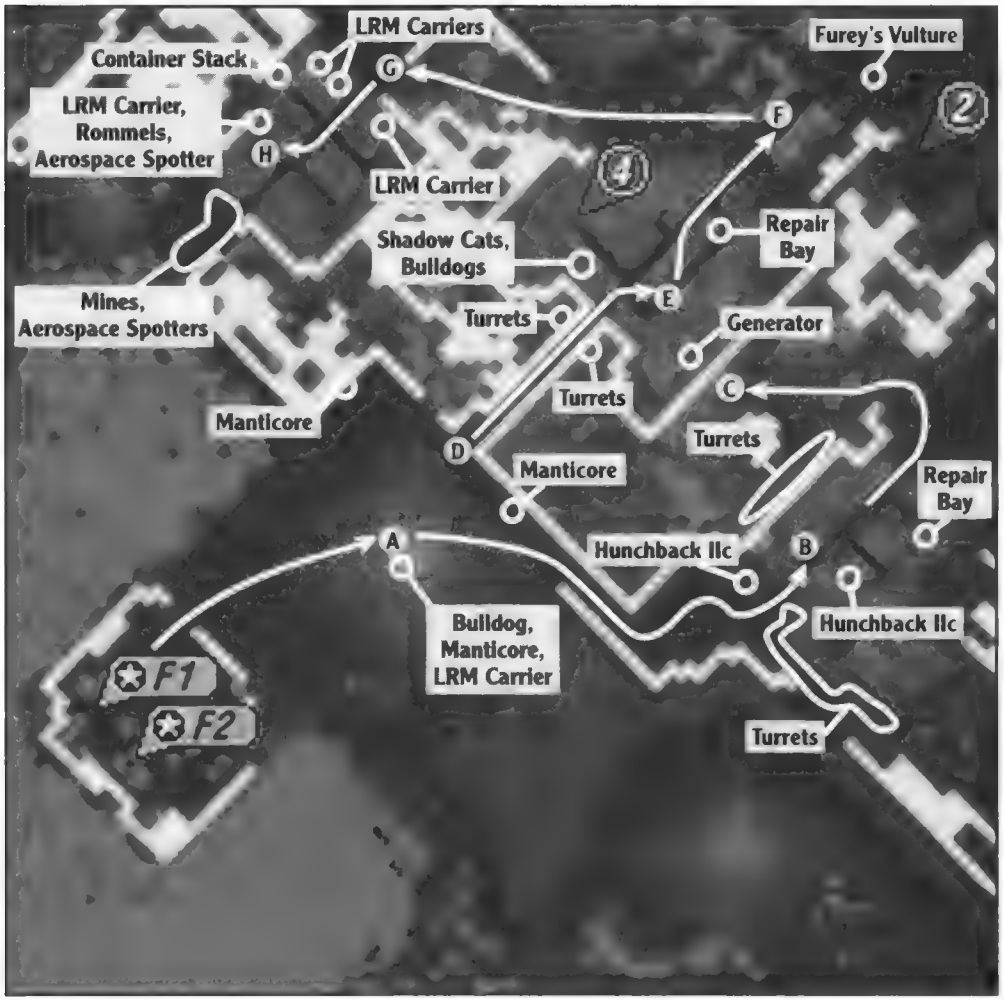
Your objectives are as follows:

- Capture/destroy 2 HQs and destroy Defenders
- Move all units to Extraction Point
- Capture/destroy 3 HQs and destroy Defenders (Secondary)
- Capture 2 Component Vaults (Secondary)

Overview

There are several ways to attack this mission, so the method explained in the Strategy Blueprint certainly isn't your only option. It's fairly simple to execute—at least in theory. Also, it has the benefit of leading you to two different Repair Bays, which makes your job significantly easier.

Make no mistake, however: this is a pretty difficult mission, especially if you choose to take over all three HQ Buildings. In particular, the combat with ace MechWarrior Katherine Furey is brutal, as her 'Mech is heavily armored and packs a Rail Gun capable of downing one of your 'Mechs with one lucky shot.



Battle Map of Mission 1-3

Salvage is as follows:

- Point 4 Component Vaults: 2 Heavy Thunderbolts
- Container Stack near Point H: 2 Clan Gauss Rifles

Recommended Forces

You have 280 tons of drop weight, two Small Artillery Strikes, and one Sensor Probe to work with in this mission. It's recommended that you buy a *Bushwhacker A* to supplement your forces, unless you had the good fortune to salvage that *Mad Cat* in the last mission.

Otherwise, just make sure to take reasonably large 'Mechs (no *Commandos*). Jump 'Mechs are recommended in the mission briefing, but you won't need them to beat the mission in the way we recommend.

Also, purchase and use any X-Pulse Lasers, Clan LRMs, Heavy Thunderbolts, and LB-X Autocannons (especially the Clan variant) you can get your hands on; these weapons will give your 'Mechs great medium- and long-range punch.

Because you'll have access to Repair Bays in this mission, ammunition won't be a major concern.

Strategy Blueprint

Your forces start out in the southwestern corner of the map. Have them proceed northeast toward Point A, a hilltop that will reveal a good deal of the surrounding terrain. Destroy the three vehicles that approach you as you near Point A.

After revealing the terrain at Point A, continue to follow the path drawn on the Battle Map. It leads you toward Point B, but you should proceed slowly. Along the way, you may encounter a *Manticore,* and well before you approach Point B you *will* encounter a *Hunchback IIc.* As soon as the *Hunchback* gets within firing range, have your units target it and then start moving backward, keeping it at long range. Continue to move backward while firing until it's dead.

Figure 11-7. Destroy the Turrets nearest the gate so you can safely enter the base.

The second *Hunchback IIc* lurking inside the base will now approach from the same direction as the first. Again, fight while retreating to keep the *Hunchback*'s Heavy Autocannon at bay.

With both 'Mechs gone, continue to approach the Point B base (Figure 11-7). Pick away the Missile Turrets flanking the gate to this base until the path is clear, then destroy the gate itself and enter the base. Capture or

destroy all four Turret Control Towers in this base immediately to deactivate any Turrets you didn't destroy.

Capture the Base Headquarters at Point B, then capture the nearby Repair Bay. Repair all of your 'Mechs.

Now follow the path on the Battle Map that leads from your current location to Point C. This path leads you through the north gates of the small base you're in, past a pair of Pop-Up Turrets (destroy both) and to a small ridge. Point C is a spot overlooking a power source labeled Generator on the Battle Map (if you put your mouse cursor over it in the game it's called Primary Turret Power).

Figure 11-8. Destroy Primary Turret Power from outside the base.

Destroy the forest between your 'Mechs and the Primary Turret Power. Then start picking away at the wall between your 'Mechs and the Primary Turret Power. As you do this, the pair of Shadow Cats stationed inside the middle base will likely jump out to attack you. Destroy them with concentrated fire, then turn your attention back to the wall.

Once the wall is destroyed, you can freely shoot at the Primary Turret Power from Point C. Destroy it. Then return to the Repair Bay near Point B, and repair your 'Mechs once again.

Backtrack as if you were returning to the mission's starting point at F1 and F2, but instead, take a right near Point A and halt your 'Mechs at Point D. While your 'Mechs stand at Point D, the entrance to a ravine leading to the middle base, scroll your view over the middle base. You'll see three *Bulldogs* in there. Drop one of your Small Artillery Strikes on a *Bulldog* or two to get their attention, then let the *Bulldogs* drive down the ravine toward your 'Mechs. Have your 'Mechs stand at Point D and fire from their position, destroying the *Bulldogs* as they approach.

With the *Bulldogs* gone, send your 'Mechs along the path that leads northeast to Point E. Capture the Base Headquarters at Point E. Also capture the two Component Vaults at Point 4 and the Repair Bay in the northeast corner of this base. Repair your 'Mechs.

Figure 11-9. Furey's Vulture **puts up a tough fight. Remember to move injured 'Mechs to safety when fighting her.**

When your 'Mechs are repaired, slowly move them up to Point F, keeping them in a tight pack. Furey's *Vulture* is patrolling up here. Attack the *Vulture* with everything you've got (Figure 11-9), and be sure to immediately note which of your 'Mechs Furey is targeting. Have that 'Mech run away! Furey can dish out unbelievable damage, so you can't allow her to keep pounding away at the same 'Mech.

TIP *This is a tough combat, but you should escape without losing any 'Mechs if you order the 'Mechs that are getting picked on to run away, and have the others fire on Furey from medium range.*

With Furey gone, you *could* now proceed to Point 2 and end the mission. However, if your 'Mechs are still in reasonably good shape, or if there's still some energy left in the Repair Bay, you can go repair your forces at the Repair Bay, then follow the path that leads west toward Point G.

The path leading to Point G is guarded with several Pop-Up Turrets, so you should move your 'Mechs slowly and in a tight cluster, taking out Turrets as soon they appear.

At Point G, use your remaining Small Artillery Strike on an LRM Carrier behind the walls of the nearby base. Then have your 'Mechs stand at Point G, destroying the gate to the south so they can get clear shots at the LRM Carriers and other vehicles inside.

When the flow of vehicles emerging from the gate stops, go through the gate and follow the path toward Point H. You'll encounter a few more vehicles inside the base, including Aerospace Spotters and *Rommels*. Keep your 'Mechs moving at all times to avoid air strikes, and target the Aerospace Spotters first.

When all vehicles are gone, capture the Base Headquarters at Point H to complete a secondary mission goal. Also, capture the Container Stack nearby. Then send all your 'Mechs to Point 2 to end the mission.

Mission 1-4: Eliminate Base Ogre

This mission requires you to eliminate Base Ogre by destroying its Command Building. This base, like the enemy base in the last mission, is divided into several distinct compartments or cells. The defenders of one cell usually won't come out to attack you if you're in the next cell—even if you're within visual distance. The only things that will activate individual 'Mechs within a particular cell are charging into their cell, firing at them, or triggering a Perimeter Alarm.

This mission is overwhelming if you rush it, or if you allow a Perimeter Alarm to be triggered. If you follow it slowly and methodically, however, it should be manageable.

Your objectives are as follows:

- Capture Mobile HQ (Secondary)
- Destroy Command Building
- Destroy all enemy 'Mechs

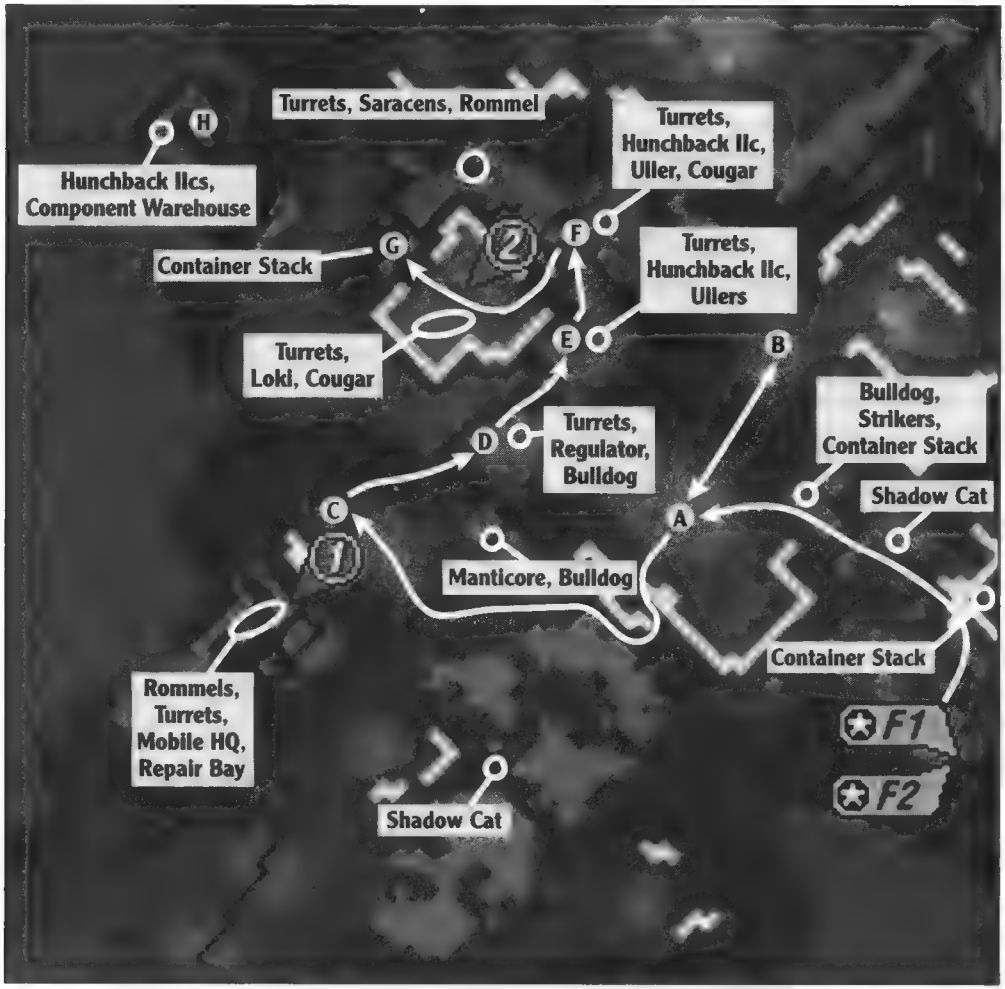
Overview

Base Ogre is divided into several cells or mini-bases. Our method of beating the mission involves a slow, methodical march from one mini-base to the next, taking over Heavy Turret Control Towers along the way so that Turrets become your allies rather than your enemies. However, bear in mind that there are many ways to attack this mission.

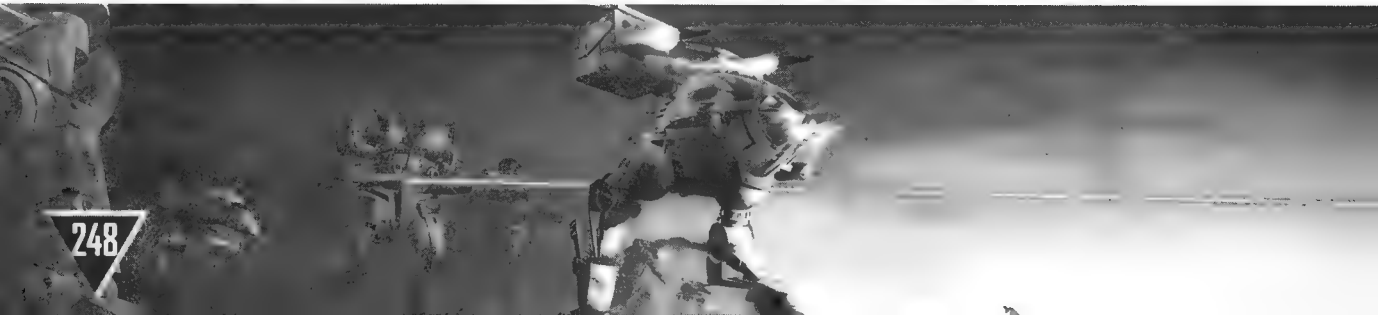
You'll capture a Repair Bay fairly early in this mission. This Repair Bay has lots of energy, so you can use it quite a lot before it runs dry. Frequently sending damaged 'Mechs back to this Repair Bay is a key to victory.

Salvage in this mission includes:

- Container Stack at map's eastern edge: 2 Clan Gauss Rifles, 1 Clan LB-X Autocannon, 1 Clan Basic Sensor
- Container Stack east of Point A: Clan Large ER-Laser
- Component Warehouses at Point F: 5 Clan LRM Racks, 1 Clan ER-PPC
- Container Stack near Point G: 2 Clan ER Lasers
- Component Warehouse at Point H: Long Tom Cannon



Battle Map of Mission 1-4



Recommended Forces

You get 350 tons and three Small Artillery Strikes for this mission. Hopefully by now you've salvaged a few Clan Mechs—a few *Shadow Cats* at the very least, and hopefully Furey's *Vulture* as well. Use these Clan 'Mechs as well as *Bushwhackers* and any heavier Inner Sphere models you happen to have. You only need one Jump-capable 'Mech.

It's recommended that you take all the usual heavy-hitting weapons, like Large X-Pulse Lasers, various LB-X Autocannons, Clan LRM Racks, Heavy Thunderbolts, and ER-PPCs. You'll have frequent opportunities to repair and re-supply your 'Mechs, so you needn't worry about ammunition.

Strategy Blueprint

Your forces start out in the southeast corner of the map. Follow the path leading to Point A, which loops north past a Container Stack that only Jump-capable Mechs can reach, and a second Container Stack guarded by a *Bulldog* and two *Strikers*. You're also likely to encounter a patrolling *Shadow Cat*. Destroy all opposition and capture both Container Stacks along the way to Point A.

At Point A, you'll gain a good view of the southeastern fringes of Base Ogre.

TIP *Two more* Shadow Cats *are on patrol in this region. They patrol a wide area, and could pop up at any time. If they appear, just dispatch them with concentrated fire and keep moving.*

Now follow the path leading northeast to Point B. This is another hilltop that shows you more of Base Ogre. Be careful to stay just out of range of Base Ogre's Turrets!

Backtrack from Point B to Point A, then follow the looping path southwest that leads to Point C. Along the way you'll encounter a parked *Bulldog* and *Manticore*. Destroy both.

At Point C, another hilltop, you'll see a cluster of three *Rommels* and one HQ Vehicle parked to the south at Point 1 (Figure 11-10). From Point C, destroy the partially concealed Artillery Turret next to the four vehicles. Then start attacking a *Rommel*. The HQ Vehicle will try to flee to the northeast. Move your 'Mechs

Figure 11-10. Attack one of the three Rommels **from a distance, staying away from that Artillery Turret.**

due east to intercept it, still firing on the *Rommels*. Don't drift to the south as you fight, because there's a second Artillery Turret down there.

After destroying the *Rommels* and capturing the HQ Vehicle, proceed west and destroy the Heavy Turret Control Tower near Point 1. Don't stray too far south as you do so, or the remaining Artillery Turret will attack.

With the Heavy Turret Control Tower gone, repair your 'Mechs in the Repair Bay near Point 1.

TIP *This Repair Bay has lots of energy, so it can perform lots of repairs. Throughout the rest of the mission, you should periodically send damaged 'Mechs back here for repairs before proceeding to the next step.*

Figure 11-11. Destroy the Perimeter Alarm first, then a couple of nearby Missile Turrets.

Now approach the mini-base at Point D, following the designated path. Destroy the Perimeter Alarm in the southwest corner, followed by the two closest Missile Turrets. Slowly advance, staying close to the water.

The *Regulator* and *Bulldog* parked inside this mini-base eventually drive out. Destroy them with concentrated fire, then send a reasonably durable, yet fast 'Mech (like a *Bushwhacker*) in to capture the Turret Control Tower at Point D.

Repair your 'Mechs. Now gather them again in the Point D mini-base. Drop one of your three Small Artillery Strikes on the *Hunchback IIc* and two *Ullers* parked in the Point E mini-base (Figure 11-12). This damages them and causes them to run south toward your 'Mechs. Allow them to come to you, giving your newly captured Turrets time to damage them. You should be able to dispatch these three 'Mechs with ease.

When these three 'Mechs are gone, send a 'Mech to capture the Heavy Turret Control Tower at Point E. Either use a Jump 'Mech to do this, or destroy the Heavy Wall south of the Control Tower and then run a 'Mech in.

Repair your 'Mechs again. Gather them in the Point E mini-base, and drop a Small Artillery Strike on the *Hunchback IIc, Uller,* and *Cougar* parked in the Point F mini-base. Again, the air strike will force the enemy 'Mechs to attack. Hang back and let your Turrets do most of the work for you. Eventually all three 'Mechs will go down.

Figure 11-12. Drop a Small Artillery Strike on this cluster of 'Mechs.

Have your 'Mechs advance on the Heavy Turret Control Tower at Point F, blasting down a Medium Wall in the way. Capture it quickly, before you sustain much damage from the Turrets. A few vehicles from the west may fire on you; fall back into your newly captured Turrets, and the vehicles will follow to their doom.

TIP *Try not to venture too far west. If you do, though, destroy any Perimeter Alarms that you get close to.*

Repair your 'Mechs again. Return to Point F and capture a pair of Component Warehouses nearby. Then drop your last Small Artillery Strike on the *Loki* in the central mini-base at Point 2 (Figure 11-13). The *Loki* and *Cougar* stationed in there will run out, and you should engage them just enough to distract them from destroying your Turret Control Towers, then retreat so that your Turrets can do most of the work. You should be able to finish both 'Mechs off with relative ease.

Figure 11-13. Target the Loki near the center of the screen with your last Small Artillery Strike.

Repair again if necessary, then run your 'Mechs from Point F into the mini-base at Point 2. Have them capture the Heavy Turret Control Tower there as quickly as possible to prevent damage. The Missile Turrets will now destroy any remaining vehicles near Point G.

Now capture the Heavy Turret Control Tower at Point G, as well as the Repair Bay and the Container Stack there. Allow the Perimeter Alarm north of G to go off when you approach it. This causes a pair of *Hunchback IIcs* stationed on an island at Point H to approach you. If you hide among your Turrets, however, the Turrets will take care of the *Hunchbacks.*

TIP *If you destroy the Perimeter Alarm by accident, no big deal; you'll just have to fight the* Hunchback IIcs *yourself when you explore the western island at Point H.*

After repairing your 'Mechs at the new Repair Bay, proceed to Point H (taking any route you choose) and capture the Component Warehouse there. If you didn't lure out the *Hunchback IIcs* there with the Perimeter Alarm earlier, you'll have to fight them now. Remember to fight them from a distance!

Finally, return to Point 2 and destroy the Command Building to win the mission.

CHAPTER 12

DESPERATE MEASURES OPERATION 2: GORGON

This second operation features timed missions. Some have explicit time limits, forcing you to accomplish specific goals before time runs out. Others, like Mission 2, have no explicit time limit but you're forced to react to a moving Convoy, which, in essence, acts like a time limit. If you're slow, you'll miss the Convoy!

You don't *need* to take fast 'Mechs for these missions, but they help out a lot. Fast 'Mechs give you a larger margin of error on timed missions, allowing you to succeed even if you waste a moment here or there, and allowing your 'Mechs to recover quickly if they wander into a bad position.

Hopefully, you'll salvage a number of speedy Clan 'Mechs to assist you with these missions. Barring that, however, you can supplement your Clan 'Mechs with the *Bushwhacker* design, which is the heaviest 'Mech you can purchase from Battalion that we'd classify as "fast."

Mission 2-1: Targets of Opportunity

The only primary objective in this mission is to move your forces to the Extraction Point. This is easy to accomplish. However, if you ignore all the secondary objectives, the payoff in potential salvage is low.

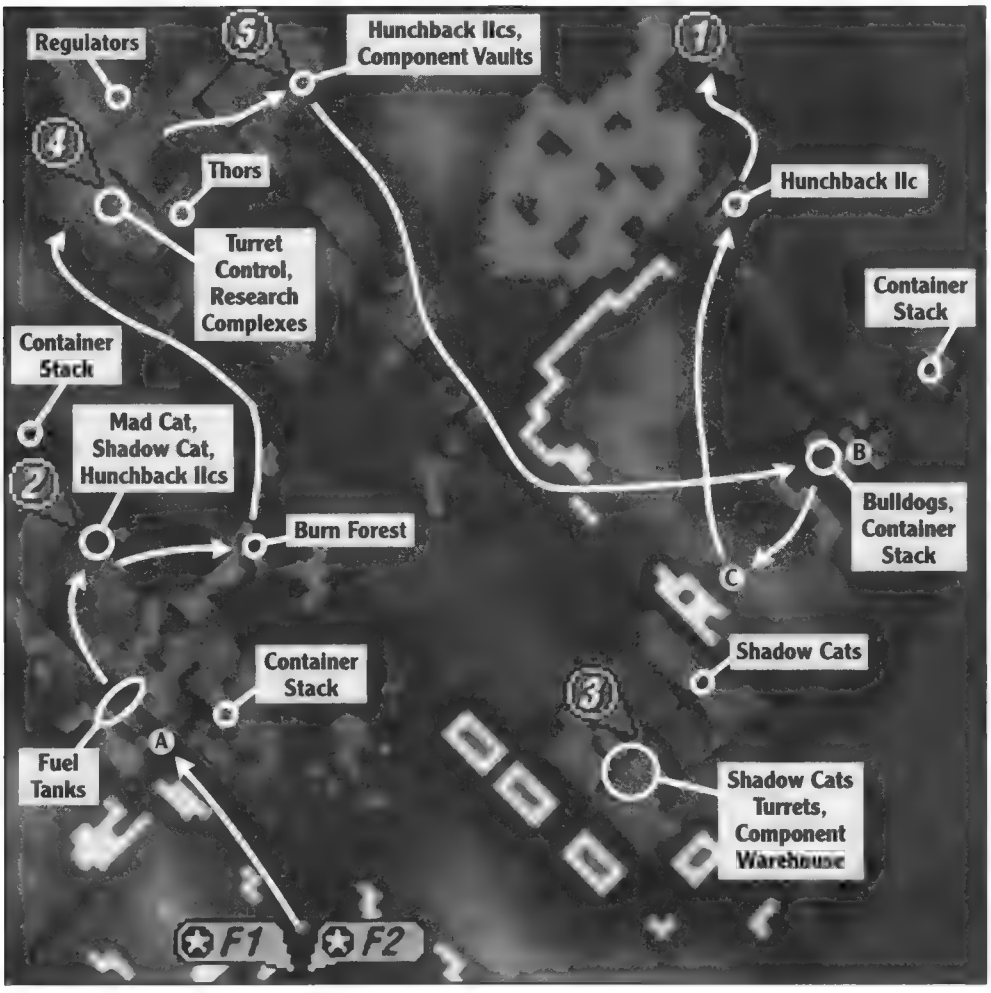
Trying to complete all the secondary objectives, on the other hand, is significantly harder. Our main strategy for beating the mission assumes that you want to complete all secondary objectives, but the Overview also gives instructions on how to complete the mission with only a single, small 'Mech and earn *more* Resource Points than you'd get for completing all secondary objectives. (This alternate method minimizes your salvage, however.)

Your objectives are as follows:

- Move all units to Extraction Point
- Destroy OmniMech Star (Secondary)
- Destroy bridge (Secondary)
- Destroy Research Complexes (2) (Secondary)
- Capture Component Vaults (2) (Secondary)
- Complete all secondary objectives

Overview

The method for beating this mission laid out in the Strategy Blueprint allows you to collect all possible salvage. If you don't have the patience for all that, however, you can take one light Jump 'Mech (a *Stiletto, Cougar, Uller,* or *Commando*) and complete the



Battle Map of Mission 2-1

mission easily, using only a small fraction of your allotted 350 tons. The compensation for your low drop weight is actually slightly more Resource Points than you'd get for completing all of the secondary objectives!

Keeping your light 'Mech out of trouble would be fairly easy as most of the enemy units in this mission are located in the bases at the edges of the map. If you choose this strategy, you may want to make a slight detour over to the small island in the northeast corner of the map, and collect the two Large X-Pulse Lasers from the Container Stack.

If you choose to go for more salvage, on the other hand, you're in for a tough fight. The hardest battle (by far) occurs near Point 2 on the Battle Map. It may take several tries to get it right.

If you use the strategy outlined here, the base located near Point 3 is never visited. Although it's theoretically possible to take out the defenders at Point 3, collect the salvage (two Clan ER Lasers), and use the Repair Bay nearby within the mission time limit of 25 minutes, the payoff isn't worth the trouble.

This mission's salvage includes:

- Point A Container Stack: 5 Clan LRM Racks
- Point 2 Container Stack: 2 Clan ER-PPCs
- Point 5 Component Vaults: 2 Rail Guns
- Point B Container Stack: 1 Clan Medium Ultra Autocannon
- Point B Island Container Stack: 2 Large X-Pulse Lasers
- Point 3 Component Warehouse: 2 Clan ER Lasers

Recommended Forces

You have 350 tons, plus three Small and two Large Artillery Strikes, at your disposal.

You can either take tough, heavy-hitting 'Mechs for this mission, or faster, lighter designs. If you take slow, heavy 'Mechs like *Jagermechs,* you'll need to arm them with potent short-range weapons. (Most of the enemy 'Mechs in this mission are fast, so you won't be able to get your slow 'Mechs far enough away to use long-range weapons.) If you go with faster designs, particularly if you've been lucky enough to salvage lots of Clan 'Mechs, you can arm them with long-range weapons instead.

If you go with slower, heavier 'Mechs, you should complement the heavy hitters with a faster, long-range 'Mech. A *Mad Cat J* is ideal for this situation (there is salvage you can get only if you have a Jump 'Mech but if you weren't lucky enough to salvage one, a *Vulture J* or *Bushwacker J* will also do). Give this 'Mech long-range weapons such as LRM Racks and ER-PPCs.

Another approach is to use faster and lighter 'Mechs such as *Bushwackers.* This approach can be more difficult and will require you to move damaged 'Mechs to the rear of combat more actively, but it's possible even on the Hard difficulty level.

Finally, take a Refit Truck on this mission. Because the mission is timed and you have slow 'Mechs, it would eat too much clock to send them back to the 'Mech Repair

Bays after each battle. Don't be afraid to use powerful weapons with limited ammo (such as Heavy Autocannons) because you can reload frequently.

Strategy Blueprint

From your start point in the south of the Battle Map, send your forces north along the indicated path until they reach Point A. Then, arrange your units as shown in Figure 12-1, with your heavy short-range 'Mechs in front, and your long-range lighter 'Mechs and Refit Truck farther back.

Send your fastest (or only) long-range 'Mech northwest through the Fuel Tanks toward Point 2, until the enemy 'Mechs at Point 2 start to move. (The enemy 'Mechs include a *Mad Cat A,* a *Shadow Cat A,* a *Hunchback IIc A* and a *Hunchback IIc W.*) As soon as you see the enemy 'Mechs move, run your long-range 'Mech back to its original position behind the front line.

Wait until the *Mad Cat* is standing near the Fuel Tanks before you detonate the tanks.

TIP *The* Mad Cat *is the biggest threat to your 'Mechs. If it won't come close enough to the Fuel Tanks, send your long-range 'Mech(s) a little closer, fire at it, then back up again. Don't worry too much about moving your short-range 'Mechs during the battle. It's more important to keep your long-range 'Mech out of trouble. If one of your short-range 'Mechs gets beat up, take it out of the battle and send the Refit Truck to repair it.*

TIP *The Fuel Tanks have a Gas Tank and Pipe Junction attached to them. These structures are more fragile than the Fuel Tanks themselves, and are therefore easier to destroy instantly. The destruction of any one of these structures causes the whole group to go up in flames.*

Figure 12-1. Position is important in this battle. Be sure not to place your 'Mechs too close to the Fuel Tanks.

This battle is tricky, and it may take several tries to get it right. The key is to injure as many enemy 'Mechs as possible in the Fuel Tank explosion—especially the *Mad Cat*.

Once the four enemy 'Mechs have been destroyed, have a 'Mech capture the Container Stack just to the east. Then send all of your units north to Point 2. Capture the 'Mech Repair Bay and the Container Stack. Repair your 'Mechs.

From Point 2, head east along the path shown on the Battle Map. Destroy the forest blocking your route and cross the land bridge to the northern half of the map.

As soon as your 'Mechs cross the water, send them northwest along the shoreline (to keep them out of range of the Turrets at the base at Point 4), still following the indicated path.

Gather all of your units on the hill just southwest of the Point 4 base. Then send your fastest 'Mech into the base to capture the Turret Control. This causes the two *Thors* stationed in the base to power up and start fighting the Turrets. Five *Regulators* then drive down from the north to attack. The *Thors* are occupied for a while with the Turrets, so initially begin destroying the *Regulators*. Once the *Thors* decide to come after your 'Mechs, take them on instead. Most importantly, don't let the Turret Control be destroyed.

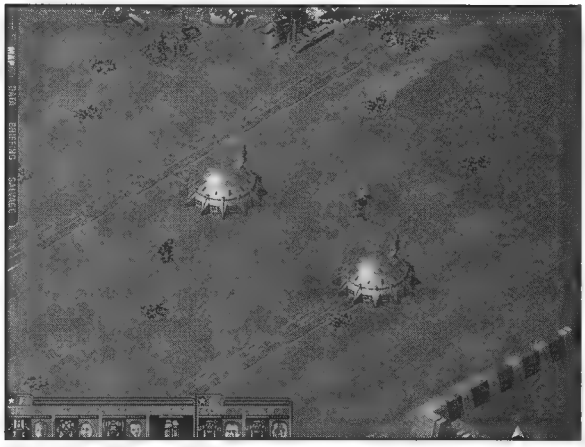


Figure 12-2. Two Hunchbacks **guard the Component Vaults near Point 5.**

After the battle, use the Refit Truck to repair your 'Mechs and destroy the Research Complexes at Point 4.

Next, head east toward Point 5 on the Battle Map. There are a pair of *Hunchback IIcs* on patrol in this area. Send your short-range 'Mechs ahead until they engage one of the *Hunchbacks*. Then, add your long-range 'Mech to the battle. Again, if one of your 'Mechs starts to get in trouble, pull it out and send in the Refit Truck. When the battle is over, capture the Component Vaults.

With the *Hunchbacks* dispatched, send your units southeast toward the base at Point B, as shown on the Battle Map. You'll encounter five *Bulldogs;* retreat as you fight them to stay out of Heavy Autocannon range.

When the *Bulldogs* have been eliminated, send your Jump 'Mech into the base and capture the Container Stack. Then jump across the blown-out bridge leading to an island north of Point B. Capture the Container Stack there.

Gather and repair all of your 'Mechs at Point 5, then send them to the hilltop at Point C. Have your fastest 'Mech move far enough south to expose the bridge to the south. Place a Large Artillery Strike on this bridge. (Hopefully you can do this without disturbing the two *Shadow Cats* residing nearby.)

Figure 12-3. A Large Artillery Strike takes out the bridge near Point 3.

Repair your 'Mechs and send them north toward Point 1. As you approach the Extraction Point, you encounter two Missile Turrets and a lone *Hunchback IIc* on patrol. You should have no problem destroying these forces.

Continue north to the Extraction Point. When all of your units arrive, you win the mission.

MISSION 2-2: CAPTURE ORDNANCE CONVOY

This mission requires you to capture Salvage Rigs that move across the map in a heavily guarded Convoy. You need to capture at least four Salvage Rigs to complete your main objective, and you get bonus points for capturing more than that.

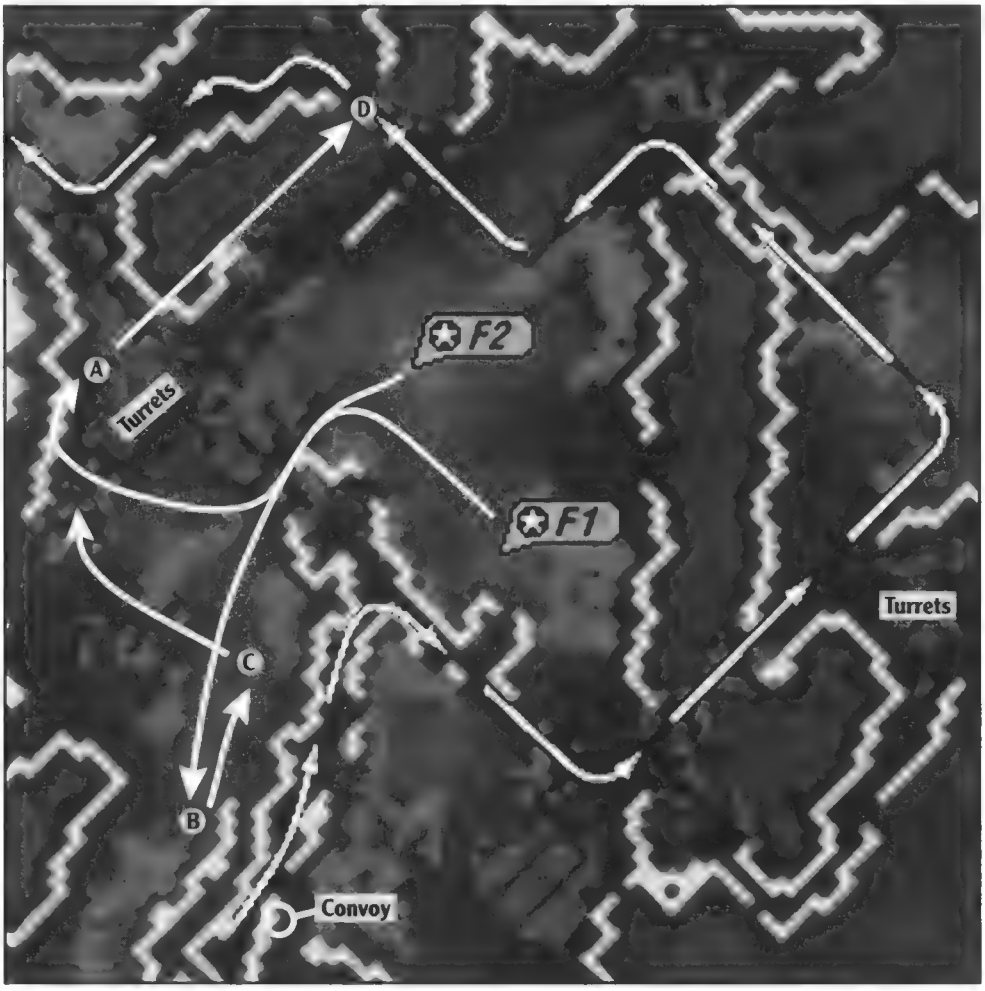
The Convoy is guarded by an assortment of heavy 'Mechs and vehicles, including *Mad Cats, Nova Cats* and a customized *Masakari.*

Your objectives are as follows:

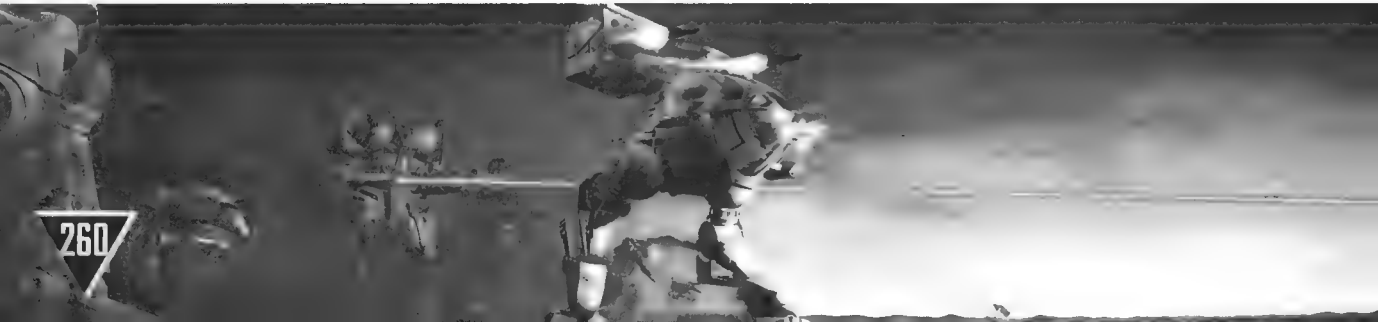
- Capture 4 of 7 Salvage Rigs
- Capture 6 of 7 Salvage Rigs (Secondary)
- Capture 7 of 7 Salvage Rigs (Secondary)

Overview

This is another mission in which we recommend pausing the game occasionally. You'll be moving independent groups of 'Mechs at the same time that the Convoy is busy trying to escape, which can lead to frustration and confusion unless you occasionally pause and assign orders.



Battle Map of Mission 2-2



The only salvage in this mission is contained within the Salvage Rigs that you must capture:

- Rig 1: 3 Large X-Pulse Lasers
- Rig 2: 2 Clan Heavy Ultra Autocannons
- Rig 3: 3 Heavy Thunderbolts
- Rig 4: 3 ER-PPCs
- Rig 5: 2 Large X-Pulse Lasers
- Rig 6: 3 Heavy LB-X Autocannons
- Rig 7: 1 Small Laser, 4 Long Toms

Recommended Forces

You have 385 tons for this mission, plus five Small Artillery Strikes and one Large Artillery Strike.

TIP *You have lots of Artillery Strikes for this mission, so feel free to use them—but be warned that it's tough to damage the Convoy's combat units without damaging the Salvage Rigs as well. You should err on the side of caution when using your Artillery Strikes rather than destroying Salvage Rigs with accidental artillery blasts.*

Things will go smoothly if you take *only fast 'Mechs* for this mission: This means *Bushwhackers* and speedy Clan designs. Slow 'Mechs won't get you very far; in fact, if you use slow 'Mechs, you might have to resign yourself to not capturing all the Salvage Rigs.

Also, be sure to bring along a Refit Truck. This truck is key to success, as there are no Repair Bays on the map.

Load all of your 'Mechs with potent long-range weapons, and skimp on short-range weapons. Place your lightest 'Mech and your Refit Truck in Force Group 2.

Strategy Blueprint

The strategy for this mission requires you to be attentive and play it by ear. This is necessary because you must react to the movement of the Convoy, as opposed to most missions, in which your enemies are largely static and you can attack them at your leisure.

Immediately after the mission starts, pause the game. Select your lightest 'Mech (which should be in Force Group 2) and assign it a running path (using F10) that takes it to Point A, following the path drawn on the Battle Map.

Figure 12-4. Have your 'Mech capture this Heavy Turret Control Tower.

Now select the remainder of your units and assign them to run to Point B. (They'll follow the path drawn on the Battle Map). Set the game in motion.

As your lone light 'Mech approaches Point A, have him capture the Heavy Turret Control Tower there and then run to rejoin his comrades at Point B.

Meanwhile, the rest of your units find themselves at Point B. The Convoy is visible, emerging from the south at the spot labeled Convoy on your map.

TIP *The Convoy consists of the following units, in this order:*

- *2* Mad Cat Js
- *Cluster: 2 Salvage Rigs, 1* Nova Cat A, *2* Manticores
- *Cluster: 2 Salvage Rigs, 1* Nova Cat J, *2* Strikers
- *Cluster: 2 Salvage Rigs, 1* Nova Cat W, *2 LRM Carriers*
- *Cluster: 1 Salvage Rig, Osis'* Masakari

Your units should target the pair of *Mad Cat Js* that lead the convoy. Attack from the vicinity of Point B, with the Refit Truck positioned somewhat farther from the convoy than your 'Mechs. The *Mad Cats* are Jump-capable and will jump up to meet your 'Mechs, so you'll need to move your units backwards during combat to maintain medium-long range.

TIP *If you want to, you can initiate your attack on the* Mad Cats *with an Artillery Strike.*

Remember to immediately move injured units to the rear of the fight. There, the Refit Truck can patch them up immediately, and you can send them right back into the fray. Feel free to pause the game at any time to facilitate repairs and 'Mech movements.

When the *Mad Cats* are gone, return to Point B and shoot at subsequent 'Mechs and combat vehicles in the convoy. The next target is a *Nova Cat* that *can't* jump, so it can't get at your forces. Shred it with long-range fire, along with the pair of *Manticores* accompanying it.

Figure 12-5. Attack the Convoy from the relative safety of Points B and C.

Continue to shred enemy units as they walk through the valley, moving your 'Mechs between Points B and C for the best possible shot. Always keep your 'Mechs close enough to the Convoy to shoot at it, but far enough away to prevent the enemy from using shorter-range weapons. Keep repairing 'Mechs that get damaged.

TIP *This early phase of the mission is critical to success. If you manage to get your 'Mechs down to Point B quickly enough, and destroy enough of the forces protecting the Convoy, the rest of the mission won't be that difficult. If you're too slow and let the Convoy pass Point B relatively unhindered, on the other hand, you'll face tough combat later on.*

Eventually the Convoy moves north of the valley. A glance at your mini-map shows that while part of the Convoy is following the path drawn on the Battle Map (the one that loops all the way to the east before hooking back to the west), another part of the Convoy is likely to be heading due north, up the center of the map.

Now you should send your 'Mechs and Refit Truck northwest along the path connecting Point C to Point A. Your units end up in the small, abandoned base at Point A (the one that your smallest 'Mech visited at the mission's start).

Figure 12-6. Capture the Salvage Rigs, then turn your attention to the remainder of the Convoy.

Now that your forces are at Point A, they should be able to cut off the segment of the Convoy that was traveling due north. That segment of the Convoy will eventually turn west and pass along the road just north of Point A. Intercept this part of the Convoy and destroy any combat vehicles you failed to pick off earlier. Then capture the Salvage Rigs.

Now you should turn your attention to the other part of the convoy, which is probably still following the route drawn on the Battle Map. Send your 'Mechs and Refit Truck northeast to Point D, a bridge that the remainder of the Convoy will try to use.

TIP *If you were too slow and it's clear that your 'Mechs can't reach Point D before the Convoy gets there, you can destroy the bridge at D with artillery strikes, thus forcing the Convoy to proceed south toward your 'Mechs at Point A.*

Intercept the remainder of the Convoy and destroy the defenders. Capture the remaining Salvage Rigs to win the mission.

TIP *Again, we'll stress that the latter half of this mission isn't tough if you did a good job in the first half. The key is to destroy or severely weaken most of the Convoy's defenders from your perch at Points B and C. Then you won't have to face many enemies later on.*

If you had trouble with combat at the end of the mission, try again, and this time try to damage the Convoy's protectors more in the mission's early stages.

MISSION 2-3: ELIMINATE ORBITAL GUNS

Your mission is to capture the Headquarters Building located at Point 1, then destroy each of the Mobile Orbital Guns (MOGs) and their nearby Targeting Computers. This mission is fairly easy if you take a disciplined and careful approach, following the strategy outlined below.

You have a 30-minute time limit for this mission.

Your objectives are as follows:

- Capture the Base HQ
- Destroy MOG and Targeting Computer 1
- Destroy MOG and Targeting Computer 2
- Destroy MOG and Targeting Computer 3
- Destroy MOG and Targeting Computer 4
- Destroy MOG and Targeting Computer 5

Overview

The first order of business is to take over the southeastern base. It contains a Sensor Control that will give you sensor coverage of almost the entire map. It also contains a Headquarters Building (located at Point 1) that reveals the location of all the MOGs. Finally, this base also contains a 'Mech Repair Bay, which makes things easier if you sustain significant damage while taking control of the base.

All of the MOGs (except for the one at Point 5) are lightly guarded. Fortunately, you're given enough artillery power in this mission to take out the MOG at Point 5 without having to actually go there.

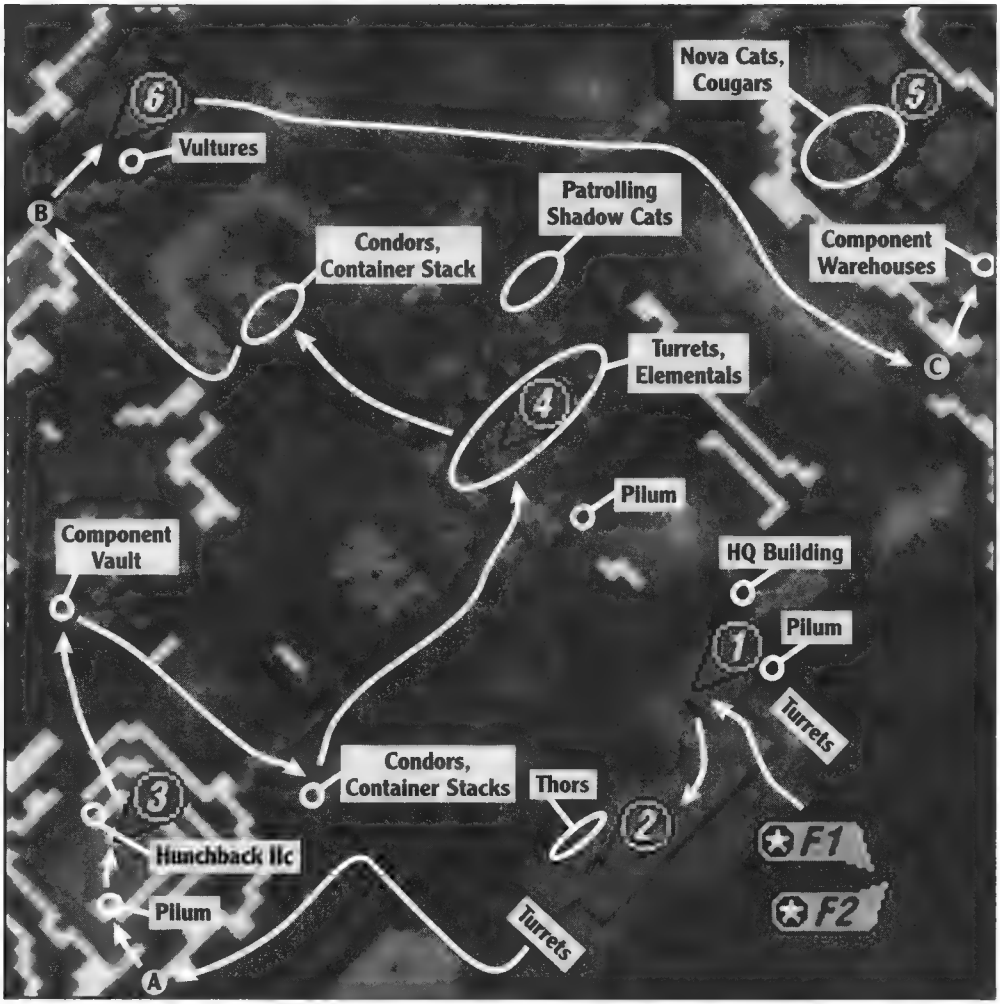
Salvage includes:

- West Component Vault: 2 Light LB-X Autocannons
- Southwest Container Stacks: 2 Clan Pulse Lasers, 2 Clan Large ER Lasers
- Northwest Container Stack: 2 Large X-Pulse Lasers
- Point 5 Component Warehouses: 3 Clan Pulse Lasers, 2 Clan Large ER Lasers, 1 Probe

Recommended Forces

You're allotted two Small Artillery Strikes, one Large Artillery Strike, two Sensor Probes, and two Camera Drones. Your drop weight limit is 250 tons.

Durability is more important than speed in this mission, even though there is a 30-minute time limit. As long as you're efficient, you'll have plenty of time to accomplish



Battle Map of Mission 2-3

all of your objectives. You have 350 tons to work with, so make sure you bring some heavy hitters. If you want to collect all of the salvage available, also bring at least one reasonably fast Jump 'Mech.

As usual, bring heavy-hitting or super-efficient weapons, like Clan ER-PPCs, Large X-Pulse Lasers, and Clan LB-X Autocannons.

Strategy Blueprint

From your start point, head northwest to the nearby base. Blast a hole in the southeastern wall and send your units through. (Watch for the Pop-Up Turret near the wall.)

Take over the Sensor Control Building, the Headquarters Building (Point 1 on the Battle Map), and the Turret Control Tower. Keep your 'Mechs in the northern half of the base as you capture these structures.

TIP *The Sensor Control gives you sensor readings over a large portion of the map. The Headquarters Building reveals each of the MOGs that you need to destroy.*

Once you've captured these buildings, it's time to deal with the three *Thors* stationed at the southwest end of the base (near Point 2 on the Battle Map). Try to hang back and make them come to your 'Mechs one at a time, using a fast 'Mech to lure them out if necessary.

Figure 12-7. Capture the Headquarters building to uncover each of the MOGs.

TIP *If a* Pilum *patrolling the northeast edge of the base attacks your forces, take care of it before engaging the* Thors. *If not, dispatch it only after the* Thors *are gone.*

When the *Thors* and *Pilum* have been destroyed, send your forces southwest to the southwest end of the base (Point 2 on the Battle Map). Capture a Repair Bay along the way, and send your 'Mechs in for repairs.

Figure 12-8. The MOGs near Point 2 are guarded by three Thors.

As some of your 'Mechs are repaired, have others take out the MOG and Targeting Computer at Point 2.

TIP *If at any time during this mission your 'Mechs get seriously damaged, you can send them back to this Repair Bay. But watch the clock!*

Now send your 'Mechs along the path leading away from Point 2, making sure to capture the nearby Turret Control on the way out of the base.

Follow the path west across the bridge, then turn southwest and follow the river to Point A, as shown on the Battle Map.

Figure 12-9. The MOG at Point 3 is surrounded by four Artillery Turrets.

There are only two defenders at Point 3: A *Hunchback IIc* and a *Pilum*. As soon as your 'Mechs reach Point A, the *Pilum* engages them. Destroy it. You'll deal with the *Hunchback* later.

The MOG at Point 3 is surrounded by four Artillery Turrets, so don't get too close. If you can't see the two Turrets closest to you, deploy a Camera Drone to reveal them.

Instruct your 'Mechs to fire from position on the Artillery Turret closest to them. This causes the *Hunchback* to engage your forces. As you fight the *Hunchback,* be sure to stay out of range of those Turrets.

When the *Hunchback* has been destroyed, take out the two nearest Artillery Turrets, then destroy the Turret Control. Afterwards, send your 'Mechs in to destroy the MOG and the Targeting Computer at Point 3.

TIP *There are two pairs of* Shadow Cats *that patrol between Point 3, Point 4, Point 5, and Point 6 on the Battle Map. Once you have captured the Sensor Control near Point 1, you will be able to tell where they are most of the time. You can tell them apart from patrolling vehicles by their sensor rings. You can choose to engage them or avoid them. If you chose to engage the* Shadow Cats, *don't fight both pairs at once.*

TIP *At any point during the mission, an enemy 'Mech may decide to destroy a Sensor Tower. If this happens and you're about to enter an area that doesn't have sensor coverage, use a Sensor Probe to see what lies ahead.*

Send your 'Mechs north along the path indicated on the Battle Map, and capture the nearby Component Vault. (A pair of *Condors* parked to the southeast may approach as you do this; destroy them if they do.)

Next, send your 'Mechs to the southeast and capture the two Container Stacks located there. Destroy the *Condors* now if you didn't earlier.

Now head northeast along the path leading to Point 4; you may encounter a *Pilum* along the way.

Point 4 is surrounded by Missile Turrets, and there are Elementals lurking in the nearby ruins. Get close enough to Point 4 to coax the Elementals out, and destroy them while staying out of Turret range.

Once the Elementals have been eliminated, either take over the nearby Turret Control or destroy it. Then, destroy the MOG and Targeting Computer.

TIP *If you plan on fighting some patrolling* Shadow Cats, *you may want to capture the Turret Control and wait for the* Shadow Cats *to approach Point 4.*

From Point 4, head northwest along the path shown on the Battle Map. You'll likely encounter two *Condors*. Destroy the *Condors* and capture a nearby Container Stack.

Send your 'Mechs northwest toward Point B, still following the path shown on the Battle Map. A pair of *Vultures* on patrol near Point 6 will engage your forces as they approach. As long as your 'Mechs are healthy, you should be able to destroy them without incurring too much damage.

TIP *Make sure that any remaining* Shadow Cats *on patrol are far from Point 6 when you engage the* Vultures. *Taking on four or six 'Mechs at once can have devastating consequences.*

Figure 12-10. Two Vultures **guard the MOG at Point 6.**

When the *Vultures* have been destroyed, take out the MOG and Targeting Computer at Point 6.

This leaves only the MOG and Targeting Computer at Point 5. Point 5 is a well-guarded base, with Turrets, two *Cougars,* and two *Nova Cats.* However, you also have two Small Artillery Strikes and one Large Artillery Strike at your disposal. One Small and one Large Artillery Strike placed on the MOG is enough to destroy both the MOG and its Targeting Computer. You can win the mission right now by dropping the artillery strikes. Feel free to do so now; if you do so, you can stop reading this walkthrough.

However, there are also two Component Warehouses located on the eastern edge of the base at Point 5. If you decide you want this salvage and you have sufficient mission time left, you can send one (preferably durable) Jump 'Mech to fetch the salvage for you.

If you want the salvage, send your Jump 'Mech east to Point C, repairing at the southeastern Repair Bay if you have sufficient time remaining.

When your 'Mech has reached Point C, drop your Large Artillery Strike on the Point 5 MOG to soften it up. Then jump your lone 'Mech into the base and have it streak for the Component Warehouses. Target the MOG with a Small Artillery Strike just as the 'Mech is reaching the Component Warehouses. This strike will destroy the MOG and Targeting Computer, ending the mission, so you'll need to have those components captured by the time the strike hits.

Figure 12-11. Using artillery strikes on the MOG at Point 5 allows you to avoid the tough defenders stationed there.

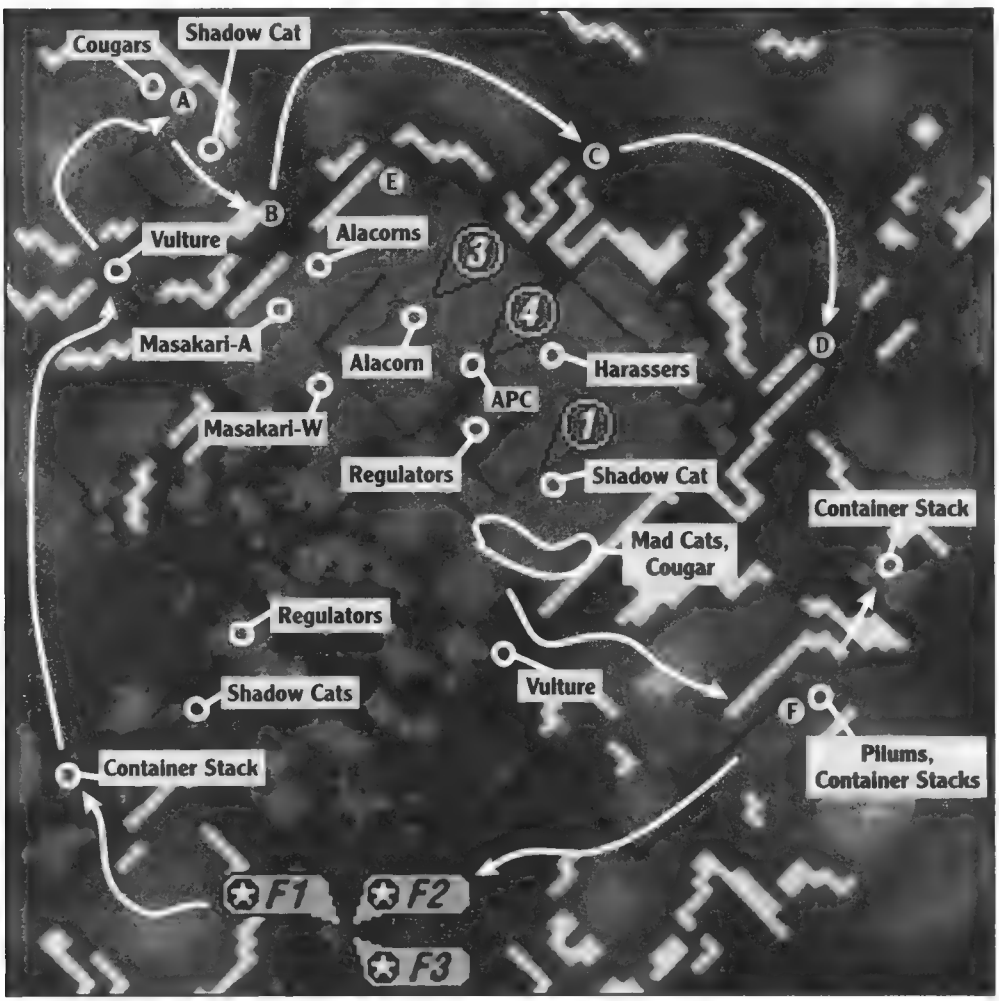
TIP *We recommend this simultaneous strike-and-capture strategy to preserve your Jump 'Mech. If executed properly, it gives your 'Mech just enough time to get the salvage, but doesn't give the enemy much time to damage your 'Mech.*

MISSION 2-4: CAPTURE ENEMY COMMANDERS

This mission requires you to capture a heavily defended Clan HQ Building. The sheer tonnage of 'Mechs located in the enemy base makes this a fairly difficult task.

The mission hinges largely on your ability to fight two *Masakaris*. Your objectives are as follows:

- Capture Clan HQ Building
- Return forces to Extraction Point
- Capture Star League Command Center (Secondary)
- Capture APC (Secondary)



Battle Map of Mission 2-4

Overview

The general strategy for this mission is to capture the small base to the northwest, then use the 'Mech Repair Bay located there throughout the rest of the mission as needed. Capturing this northwestern base isn't difficult; the hard part is teasing the defenders out of the main base in the middle of the map.

Once these defenders have been destroyed, you'll enter the base and take over the base Turrets. These Turrets will help you clean up all remaining enemy units.

The salvage includes:

- Southwest Container Stack: 2 Clan Large Pulse Lasers
- Point 3: 3 Thunderbolt, 2 Long Toms
- Southeast Container Stacks: 1 Clan LB-Xs, 3 Clan ER Lasers
- Eastern Container Stack: 4 Clan LRM Racks

Recommended Forces

Speed isn't a real issue in this mission, so if you need to, you can bring relatively slow 'Mechs. You have plenty of room; your drop limit is 450 tons.

You'll want to take the usual assortment of long-range weapons (Large X-Pulse Lasers, Clan ER-PPCs, Clan LRM Racks, Clan Large ER Lasers, etc.). Note that there are several times in this mission when you'll want to fire over walls from long range, so bring more LRMs than you normally would.

You also have three Small Artillery Strikes, one Large Artillery Strike, one Sensor Probe, and one Camera Drone.

Strategy Blueprint

From the start points shown on the Battle Map, head northwest along the designated path. This path takes you close to a Container Stack; capture it along the way.

TIP *There are two* Shadow Cats *on patrol in this area. You may or may not run into them, depending on your timing. If they come into range, fight them. Otherwise, leave them for later.*

Continue north along the path drawn on the Battle Map until you reach the northern half of the map. Walk your 'Mechs cautiously until they meet a *Vulture* on patrol southwest of Point A. Destroy the *Vulture* and continue along the indicated path.

Gather all of your 'Mechs on the hilltop southwest of Point A.

A *Shadow Cat* is on patrol around the base at Point A. There are two *Cougars* stationed inside the base as well. Be patient and wait for the *Shadow Cat* to come to you.

Figure 12-12. Walking up the hill reveals two Cougars **and a** Shadow Cat **near Point A.**

TIP *The* Cougars *emerge when you fire at the* Shadow Cat. *Most of the time, you should be able to destroy or severely damage the* Shadow Cat *before the* Cougars *can enter the battle.*

When all three Clan 'Mechs have been eliminated, head northeast into the base at Point A. Capture the 'Mech Repair Bay and begin making repairs. When all of your 'Mechs have had their turn in the Repair Bay, send them east to Point B on the Battle Map.

From Point B, you should be able to see the *Masakari A* and two *Alacorns* in the main base to the south. Drop a Small Artillery Strike on each *Alacorn,* and a Large Artillery Strike on the *Masakari A.*

Figure 12-13. A Masakari W **and two** Alacorns **are stationed in the north end of the central base.**

TIP *The Artillery Strikes set the* Alacorns *in motion. They will leave the base through the northern exit, then eventually loop down from the north to attack your forces at Point B.*

The Artillery Strikes also alert a Masakari W *that's on patrol inside the base. It, too, will leave the base through the northern exit, loop west, and attack your forces from the north.*

The Alacorns *and* Masakari W *are slow, however, so you'll have a little free time in which to attack the* Masakari A *from your vantage point at B.*

You can and should, therefore, attack the Masakari A *from Point B with everything you've got* until *the* Alacorns *or* Masakari W *appear from the north and engage your forces.*

Attack the *Masakari A* from Point B until the *Masakari W* or the *Alacorns* come into range from the north. Once this happens, target the newcomers and retreat to the northwest toward Point A.

TIP *Backing toward Point A allows you to fight the newcomers without remaining in the* Masakari A*'s weapon range.*

Note however that the Masakari A *will slowly leave the base as soon as you stop fighting it, so you can expect it to come after you eventually, as well.*

When the *Masakaris* and *Alacorns* have been disposed of, send your 'Mechs in for another round at the 'Mech Repair Bay.

When repairs are done, send your 'Mechs northeast along the path shown on the Battle Map until they reach Point C. Be sure to visit each of the hilltops along the way to maximize visibility.

Figure 12-14. Use an artillery strike to flush out the APC, as well as destroy two Harassers.

The next goal is to get the APC out of the base and away from most Clan defenders. To do this, divide your 'Mechs into two equal groups. Send one group to Point D and leave the other at Point C. (This will block the APC's escape routes.)

Deploy a Camera Drone at Point 4. This reveals the APC and two *Harassers* guarding it. Use your remaining Small Artillery Strike to take out the two *Harassers,* being careful not to hit the APC.

When the Artillery Strike detonates, the APC will flee the base along with a pair of *Regulators.* These vehicles will follow one of two routes—either a route leading past Point C, or a route leading past Point D. Fortunately, you've stationed 'Mechs on both paths. When the vehicles approach, destroy the *Harassers* then capture the APC.

Now send all of your units back to Point B, making sure to stay out of range of the main base's Turrets. When all of your 'Mechs have arrived at Point B, blast through the northwest wall of the base (at the spot indicated on the Battle Map) and send your 'Mechs just inside the wall.

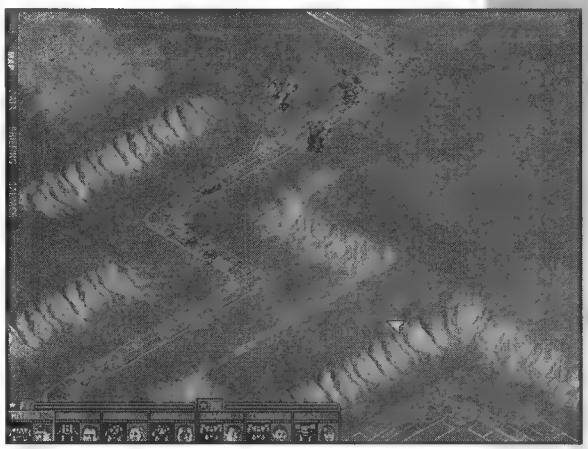


Figure 12-15. A 'Mech blockade prevents the APC from escaping, but first the Regulators **must be destroyed.**

Send one tough 'Mech over to the Turret Control at Point E and capture it.

Now observe Point 3. If the *Alacorn* on patrol near Point 3 is near the Turret Control, wait until it moves away. Then blast through the wall guarding Point 3 and send a tough 'Mech in to capture the Turret Control. The newly captured Missile Turrets will take care of the *Alacorn* for you.

Now move all your 'Mechs to Point 3. Capture the Command Center, Component Warehouses, and the Gate Control nearby.

Shortly, two *Mad Cats,* a *Shadow Cat,* and a *Cougar* that are patrolling the base approach. They'll attack either your 'Mechs, your newly acquired Turrets, or both.

TIP *Sometimes one of the* Mad Cats *will go after the Turret Control. Watch for this, and if it happens, destroy that* Mad Cat *as soon as you can with concentrated fire.*

When these four Clan 'Mechs have been destroyed, send your toughest and least damaged 'Mech to capture the Turret Control at Point 1, then capture the nearby HQ Building.

Next, capture the Turret Controls along the southern edge of the base.

TIP *You may want to use a different 'Mech for each Turret Control, depending on how damaged they get. If necessary you can send 'Mechs back to the 'Mech Repair Bay at Point A.*

TIP *At some point while you are taking over the Turret Controls, a* Vulture *on patrol south of the base is likely to approach. If you've captured most of the Turrets, you can back off and let them do the fighting. If not, send your healthiest 'Mechs to lend a hand.*

When all the Turrets are captured and the *Vulture* is gone, capture the Repair Bay near Point 1 and send your 'Mechs in for repairs.

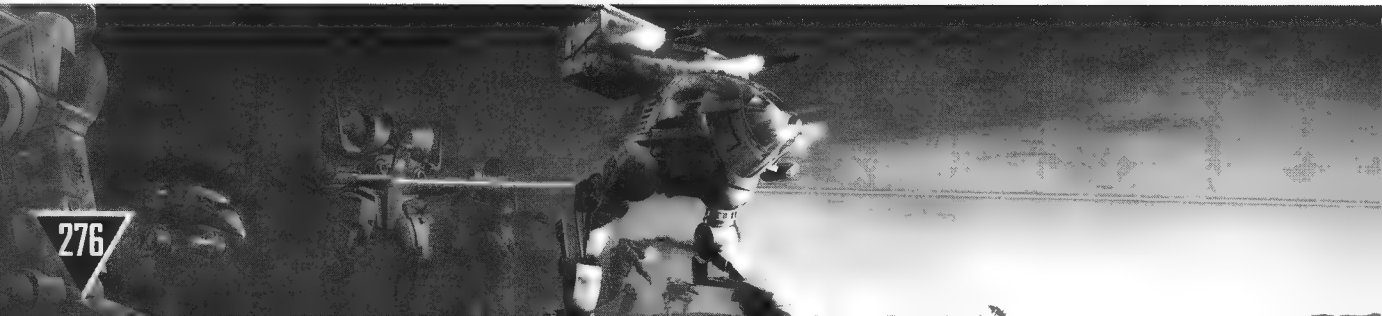
When the repairs are complete, blow a hole in the wall near the Repair Bay. If you feel the need for more salvage and your 'Mechs are healthy, send them southeast toward the base at Point F. If not, proceed directly to the Extraction Point.

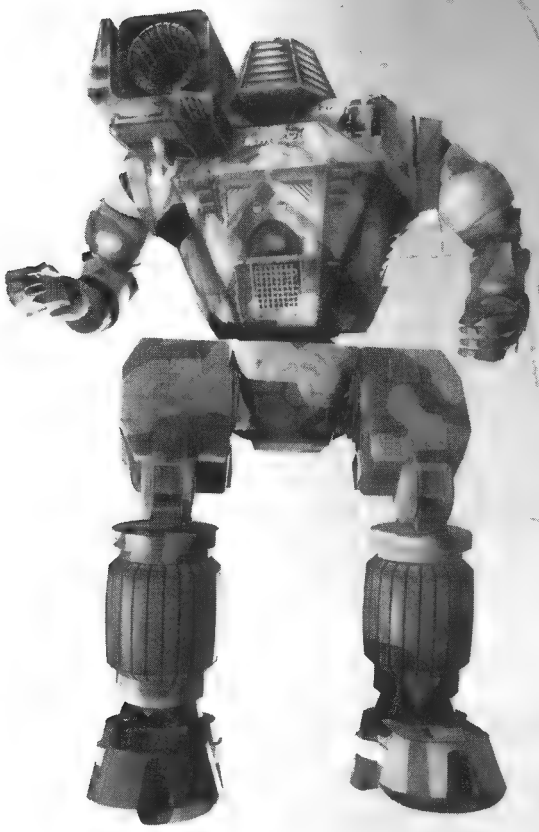
TIP *If you failed to destroy the patrolling* Shadow Cats *earlier in the missions, watch out for them now.*

If you decide to go for the salvage, send your 'Mechs toward Point F, by way of a hill to the northwest of Point F. From here you'll see four *Pilums* stationed in the base, and one *Pilum* on patrol around the base. Eliminate the *Pilums*.

Once the *Pilums* have been destroyed, capture the Container Stacks located at Point F, as well as a lone Container Stack located to the north. Then send your 'Mechs to the Extraction Point.

When the last 'Mech reaches the Extraction Point, you win the mission.





CHAPTER 13

DESPERATE MEASURES OPERATION 3: MINOTAUR

This final operation requires the patience, solid combat tactics, and quality salvage that you've (hopefully) developed in getting this far. These missions aren't impossible, but they're quite difficult, especially if you approach them in a tactically unsound way. Make no mistake: you'll have to follow an effective plan and perform at a very high level to beat these missions on Hard difficulty.

You'll encounter a fairly wide variety of missions in this last operation, including one that requires defense and another that features extremely limited tonnage. Prepare to do more, therefore, than simply blast the enemy.

Mission 3-1: Capture Base Kraken

The objectives in this mission are to capture the Sensor Control in the base at Point 1, then take over the base at Point 2 and defend it from attackers.

This mission is fairly easy if you follow the strategy described in the Strategy Blueprint, and use the Turrets at Point 2 to your advantage.

Your objectives are as follows:

- Capture Sensor Control
- Capture Hyperpulse Generator (HPG) Stations (3)
- Defend HPG Base

Overview

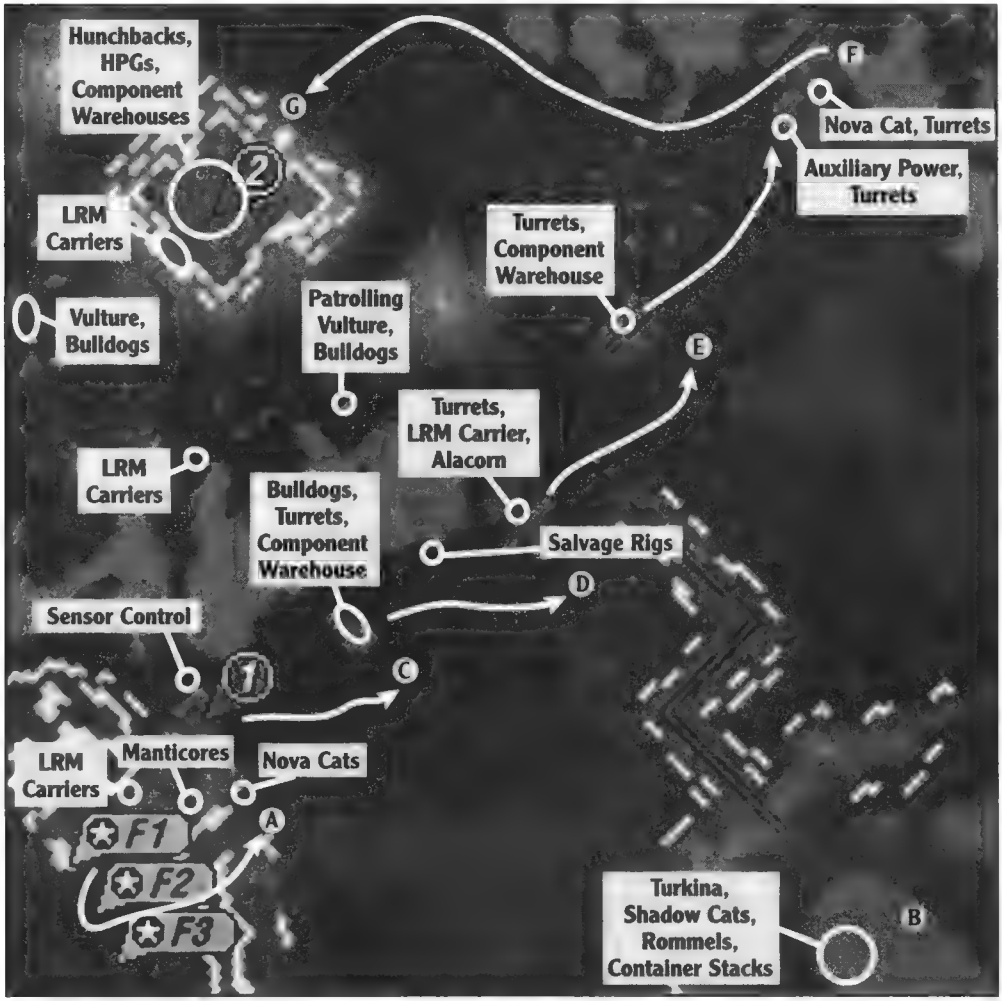
The easiest way to beat this mission is to follow the road that runs northeast through the center of the map. You can work your way up the road, taking out small Smoke Jaguar bases as you pass.

There is a 'Mech Repair Bay in the very northeastern base at the top of the map, so you can repair any damage incurred on the way.

The next step is to approach the base at Point 2 from the northeast, and take over the Turrets that guard the base. Defending the base then becomes a trivial matter.

This mission's salvage includes:

- Point 1 Container Stack: 2 Clan LB-X Autocannons
- Point 1 Component Warehouse: 2 Clan ER-PPCs
- Salvage Rigs: 5 Clan Advanced Sensors, 3 ECM, 2 Probes, 4 Clan Gauss Rifles, and 2 Clan Heavy Ultra Autocannons
- Point D Component Warehouse: 3 Clan Large Pulse Lasers, 12 Clan Streak SRM Packs



Battle Map of Mission 3-1

- Point E Component Warehouse: 2 Clan Heavy LB-X Autocannons, 2 Clan LB-X Autocannons, 2 Clan Light LB-X Autocannons
- Point F Component Warehouses: 1 Clan ER-PPC, 8 Clan Pulse Lasers, 12 Clan LRM Racks, 2 Clan Large Pulse Lasers
- Point 2 Component Warehouses: 2 Clan Gauss Rifles, 12 Clan LRM Racks, 6 Heavy Flamers, 2 ER-PPCs, 3 Clan Heavy LB-X Autocannons, 3 Clan Heavy Ultra Autocannons
- Point B: 6 Clan Pulse Lasers, 4 Heavy Flamers, 4 Clan Advanced Sensors, 6 Clan ER Lasers, 2 Clan Large Pulse Lasers, 2 Clan Large ER Lasers, 12 Clan Streak SRM Packs, 2 Clan Heavy Ultra Autocannons, 2 Clan Gauss Rifles, 2 Clan Heavy LB-X Autocannons, 12 Clan LRM Racks, 2 Clan ER-PPCs

Recommended Forces

You have 400 tons of drop weight for this mission. Speed isn't really an issue, though by now you should have a large complement of large Clan 'Mechs—so speed should be a given.

The usual array of weapons is appropriate (mostly long range, a few medium range, all heavy hitters).

You also have two Small Artillery Strikes available.

Strategy Blueprint

From the start points indicated on the Battle Map, head south along the path shown, and then turn north until you reach Point A. Nearby LRM Carriers are likely to fire at you as you do this; return fire but don't stop moving.

There is a pair of *Nova Cats* in the Point 1 base. Fight them from long range, backing away and staying away from the Turrets at Point 1.

When the *Nova Cats* have been destroyed, take out any remaining LRM Carriers. Then enter the Point 1 base and take over the Turret Control. The Turrets on the southwest edge of the base activate and destroy two *Manticores* stationed there.

Figure 13-1. Walking up the hill reveals the Nova Cats **and assorted enemies near Point 1.**

Now have your forces capture the nearby Sensor Control, Component Warehouse, and Container Stack.

TIP *A Convoy of lightly guarded Salvage Rigs makes its way south, down the map's central road, early in the mission. When you run into them depends on how quickly you move. You may want to wait for them after taking over the base at Point 1. That way, you can be sure you won't be dealing with anything else when they arrive.*

The Convoy is guarded by an Alacorn *and an LRM Carrier. In addition to the Salvage Rigs, the Convoy also includes a Mobile HQ that you can capture. Doing so reveals portions of the base at Point 2 and the base in the southeast corner of the map at Point B.*

Figure 13-2. Capturing the Mobile HQ reveals the base to the southeast (Point B) containing a Turkina **and other enemy 'Mechs and vehicles.**

Now send your forces northeast to Point C. From here, get just close enough to the nearby base to reveal two *Bulldogs* inside it; destroy them. Then enter the base and take over the Turret Control and Component Warehouse.

Next, follow the path indicated on the Battle Map to Point D. From Point D, walk slowly west toward the small nearby base and destroy the *Alacorn* and LRM Carrier stationed there. Then blow a hole in the southeast side of the wall surrounding the Turret Control and take it over.

TIP *There's a patrol consisting of a* Vulture *and two* Bulldogs *that travels along the road connecting the base near Point D with the base at Point 2. You could stay at the base at Point D and wait for the patrol, but unless you're itching for a fight, there's no reason to stay.*

Continue northeast along the path shown on the Battle Map until you reach Point E. From there, fire at the Gas Pipe located in front of the nearby Turret Control. This destroys the Turret Control. Then walk into the nearby base and capture the Component Warehouse.

Now continue northeast, still following the path drawn on the Battle Map, toward the base at Point F. Destroy the Auxiliary Power located in the southwestern edge of the base to disable the local Turrets. Also, destroy a lone *Nova Cat* guarding the base.

When the *Nova Cat* has been destroyed, capture the Repair Bay and begin repairing your 'Mechs. Also capture the nearby Component Warehouses. When all of your 'Mechs have had their turn in the Repair Bay, send them west toward the base at Point 2 along the path shown on the Battle Map.

Gather your 'Mechs at Point G. Keeping your units at long range, destroy the nearby Perimeter Alarm. Next, destroy each of the Artillery Turrets along the northeast edge of the base as marked on the Battle Map, staying at long range as you do so.

Figure 13-3. Capturing the Turret Control in the base near Point 2 is the key to this mission. Be sure the Hunchbacks **don't destroy it.**

Once you've destroyed the Artillery Turrets, blast through the wall next to the Turret Control and capture it. Four *Hunchback IIcs* and four LRM Carriers stationed in the southern parts of the base will attack. Destroy them with the help of the newly captured Turrets, making sure to protect the Turret Control as you do so.

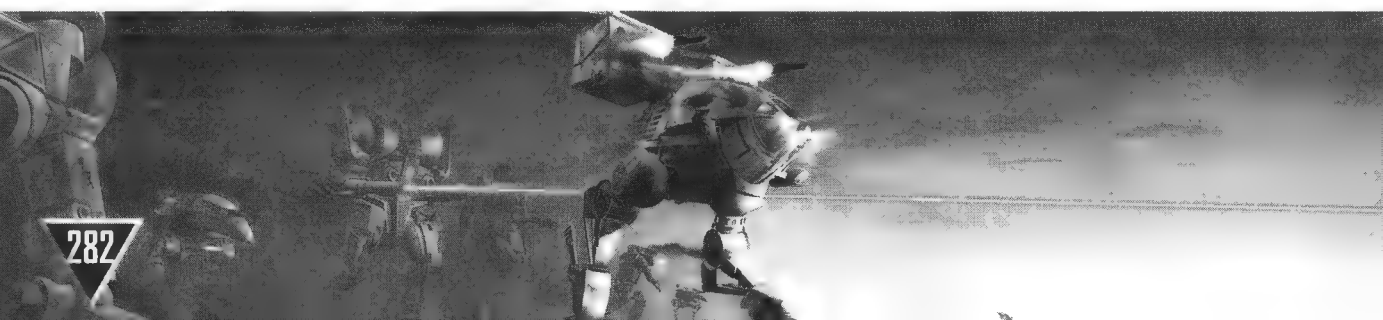
At this point, the Clan units in the base at Point B exit their base and march toward your current position. The units include a *Turkina,* two *Shadow Cats,* and four *Rommels.* It takes them an extremely long time to reach your current position at Point 2. In the meantime, capture and use the Repair Bay in the northeastern corner of the base. Also, capture the two Component Warehouses nearby.

TIP *Don't capture the HPGs at this time. If you do, you'll cheat yourself out of some salvage later in the mission.*

After an extremely long wait, the *Turkina* and company finally arrive at the base. Depending on how lucky you are, the Artillery Turrets may take out the entire invasion force by themselves. Just to make sure though, your 'Mechs should fire on attackers from inside the base's walls.

When the last attacker is destroyed, send one or two of your fastest 'Mechs to the base at Point B. If one of the 'Mechs is Jump-capable, jump over the wall and capture the Turret Control. If you don't have a Jump 'Mech, blast through the gate and then capture the Turret Control. Then, capture the vast number of salvageable structures in this base.

When you've collected all of the salvage, have the 'Mechs back at Point 2 take over the three HPGs scattered throughout the base. You win when all of the HPGs have been captured.



MISSION 3-2: ELIMINATE REINFORCEMENTS

This mission has an exceptionally low drop weight, and should be undertaken with a single Jump-capable 'Mech. It's to some degree a "puzzle" mission, requiring you to take on superior forces with the help of useful terrain features, captured Turrets, and Repair Bays.

The strategy presented here is by no means the only way to beat this mission.

Your objectives are as follows:

- Take out defenders at bridge
- Destroy Elemental Training Cadre
- Capture Repair Bay
- Eliminate Three-'Mech Patrol
- Destroy forces at Vehicle Depot
- Take out all enemies at land bridge

Overview

Unlike most missions, this one isn't about huge 'Mechs and firepower. Almost all of the objectives involve capturing Turrets and using them to your advantage.

Also, the strategy presented here focuses on capturing a Repair Bay early on, so that any damage from subsequent battles can be fixed before entering the next battle.

The mission can be easy to medium in difficulty, depending on when you arrive at any given location, where patrolling enemy forces currently are, and how lucky your shots are. If you think you've gotten stuck with a particularly unfortunate set of circumstances, restart the mission and you may have better luck.

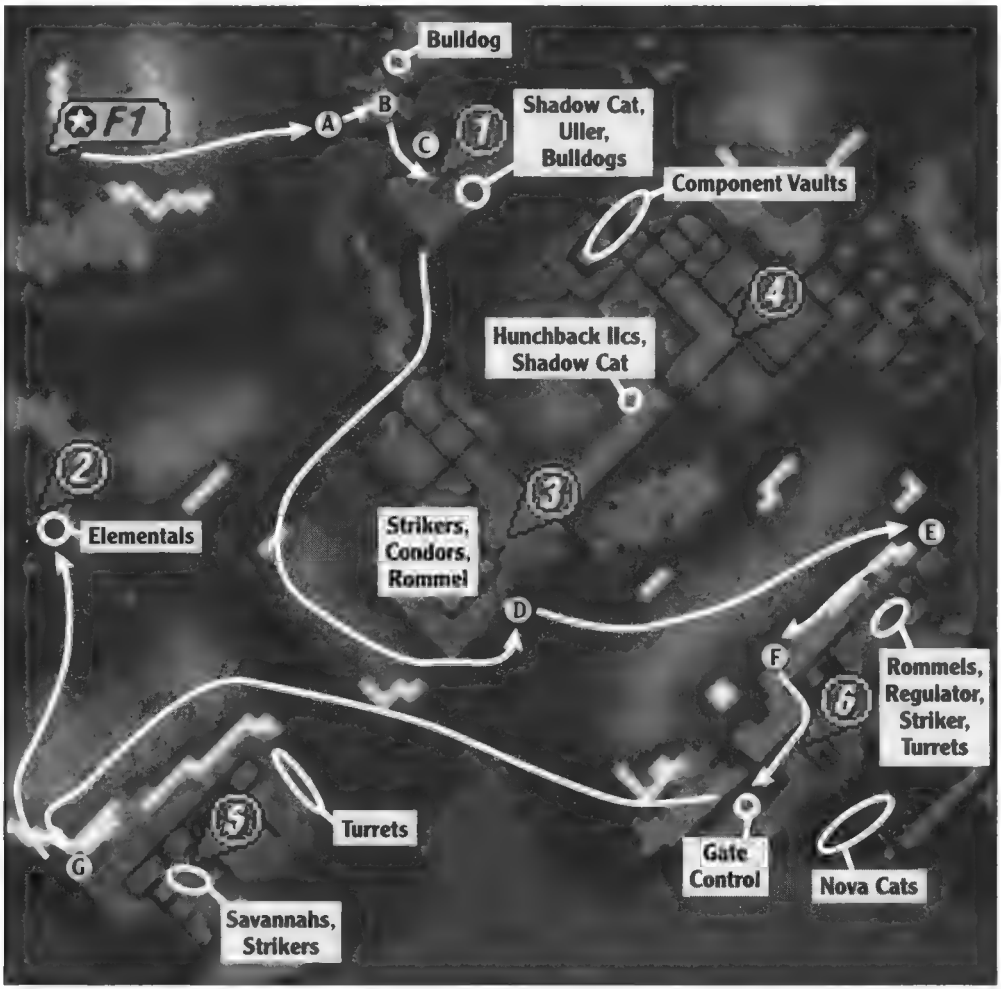
Salvage includes:

- Point 1 Component Warehouse: 5 Clan LRM Racks
- Point 4 Component Vaults: 2 Large X-Pulse Lasers, 1 Rail Gun
- Point 4 Component Warehouse: 1 Clan Advanced Sensor, 1 ECM, 2 Clan Medium Ultra Autocannons
- Point 5 Container Stack: 2 Clan Large ER-Lasers

Recommended Forces

You have four Small and two Large Artillery Strikes, three Sensor Probes, and two Camera Drones at your disposal.

You don't have much drop weight to work with in this mission: only 70 tons. The optimal 'Mech for this mission is the *Thor J.* Other possibilities include a *Loki J* or a *Nova Cat J.* If you don't have a suitable Clan Jump 'Mech on hand, you can buy a *Catapult J* or a *Jagermech J.* Speed isn't a critical issue in this mission.



Battle Map of Mission 3-2

You can complete this mission without a Jump 'Mech, but it would be much more difficult.

It's best to give your 'Mech a well-rounded arsenal. Include a few fast-firing short-range weapons for fighting off small vehicles, two Large X-Pulse Lasers or Clan ER-PPCs for long-range combat, and a few LRM Racks for firing over walls.

Strategy Blueprint

Send your 'Mech east from the start point to Point A. As you approach Point A, you'll likely see a *Bulldog* on patrol. Fire at it from long range.

As you fight the *Bulldog,* you'll hear enemy 'Mechs (a *Shadow Cat* and an *Uller*) power up. Jump across the river to Point B and finish off the *Bulldog.*Then capture the nearby Turret Control Tower.

Once you've destroyed the *Bulldog* and captured the Turret Control, head south toward the bridge at Point C on the Battle Map. Destroy the bridge to prevent the enemy from accessing your newly captured Turret Control. Now jump to Point 1. Destroy the *Shadow Cat* and *Uller* with the help of the nearby Turrets; you can hide behind a nearby wall for extra cover.

Figure 13-4. A Bulldog **guards the Turret Control near Point B.**

Figure 13-5. A Shadow Cat **and an** Uller **inhabit the base near Point 1.**

TIP *There is also a pair of* Bulldogs *to the east. The Turrets will destroy them, however—probably before you even notice them.*

Once all nearby enemies have been eliminated, capture the Component Warehouse in the base at Point 1.

Now head south along that path indicated on the Battle Map, hooking east and then north until you reach Point D.

TIP *As you move around the base at Point 3, be sure to stay out of range of its Cannon Turrets. Don't destroy them, as they'll be a valuable resource later on.*

Figure 13-6. Taking out these vehicles with an Artillery Strike makes your job easier.

From Point D, you can see two *Strikers* stationed in the base at Point 3. Other Clan vehicles (two *Condors* and a *Rommel*) probably won't be fully revealed, but may be visible as sensor traces.

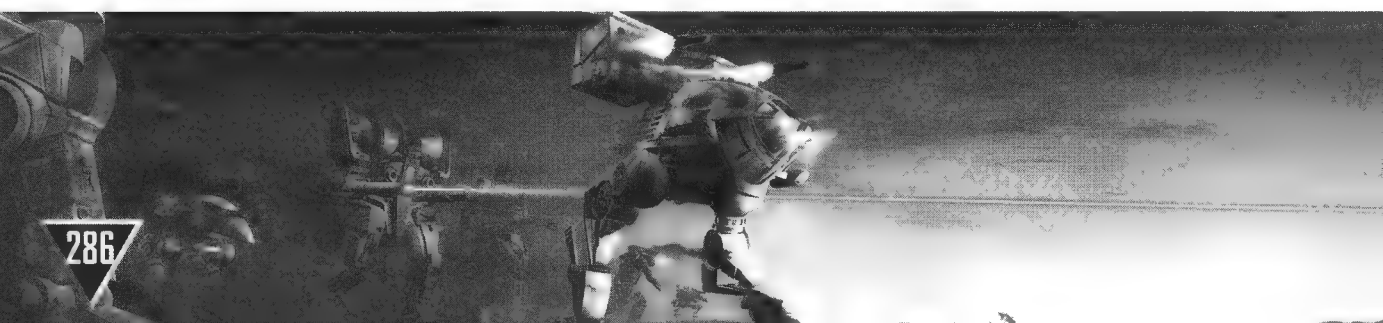
Place a Large Artillery Strike in the middle of the *Strikers* and unseen *Condors*. This strike will likely take out three of the four vehicles. Use a Small Artillery Strike to finish off any remaining visible vehicles.

Once you've eliminated the vehicles, jump the southeastern wall of the base near the Turret Control. A *Rommel* engages you, but you should be able to overpower it quickly. When the *Rommel* is destroyed, capture the Turret Control and Repair Bay. Repair your 'Mech.

TIP *A patrol consisting of two* Hunchback IIcs *and a* Shadow Cat *will at some point approach your current location from the northeast and begin to fire at the Cannon Turrets. This may happen immediately after you capture the Turret Control, or you may have time to use the Repair Bay before they arrive. All three 'Mechs may appear at the same time or they may appear separately, although the* Hunchbacks *tend to come together.*

When the patrol mentioned in the tip arrives, fight them. If you took LRMs, you can fight from inside the base's walls. If not, you can jump outside the walls and retreat as you fight, leading the enemy through the Cannon Turrets.

TIP *There are several Fuel Tanks located near the northern corner of the base. You can lead the enemy into these and detonate them.*



Once you've destroyed the patrol, you can repair your 'Mech and move on to your next task. Head southeast and then northeast, following the path shown on the Battle Map. This route takes you along a ridge adjoining the base at Point 6, and exposes most of it.

Continue along the ridge until you reach Point E. From here, fire at a *Striker* located inside the Point 6 base. Other vehicles, including four *Rommels* and a *Regulator,* also appear. Destroy these vehicles, using the nearby Fuel Tanks if necessary.

If your 'Mech is badly damaged after this battle, send it back to the Repair Bay at Point 3.

Next, backtrack along the ridge as shown on the Battle Map until you reach Point F. From here, jump over the trees and capture the nearby Turret Control in the base at Point 6. The Turrets immediately begin firing at a trio of *Nova Cats* stationed just southeast of the base.

Figure 13-7.Use the Fuel Tanks to take care of the enemy vehicles near Point 6.

Send your 'Mech to the southwest and capture the Gate Control located at the southwest end of the Point 6 base, effectively locking out the *Nova Cats* and protecting the Turret Control.

The Turrets will either destroy the *Nova Cats* outright, or nearly do so. Finish them off if the Turrets don't.

Send your 'Mech back to the Repair Bay at Point 3, if necessary, before moving on to the next task.

Head northeast toward Point 4. There are two Component Vaults and a Component Warehouse here; capture them.

Next, head southwest along the path leading to Point G. From here, you'll be able to see 15 *Savannahs* and 3 *Strikers* inside the base at Point 5. Place a Large Artillery Strike in the middle of the *Savannah* fleet and use the smaller strikes to take out the *Strikers.* (Be careful not to hit the Turret Control nearby.)

Now approach the base from the southwest corner. Pick off any remaining vehicles, either with direct fire or by shooting Fuel Tanks.

Figure 13-8. One well-placed artillery strike is useful here.

When all the vehicles in the base have been eliminated, capture the nearby Repair Bay and make any necessary repairs. Also, capture the nearby Container Stack.

Next, head north along the path shown on the Battle Map toward Point 2. At Point 2, you encounter a group of Elementals on patrol. Gain their attention, then run back to the base at Point 5. The Elementals follow. Place your 'Mech amidst the Turrets on the northeast side of the base, and let the Turrets do most of your work for you.

When the last Elemental is destroyed, you win the mission.

Mission 3-3: Obliterate Complex

The objective for this mission is simple: Destroy all the buildings in the base at Point 1 on the Battle Map. These buildings include three Engine Drills, two Gantries, a Research Complex, and four Factories.

This mission is fairly easy if you follow the plan outlined here. However, things are much more difficult if you want to get all of the salvage. The salvage is spread out over the map and tends to be well defended.

Your objectives are as follows:

- Destroy all buildings in the complex

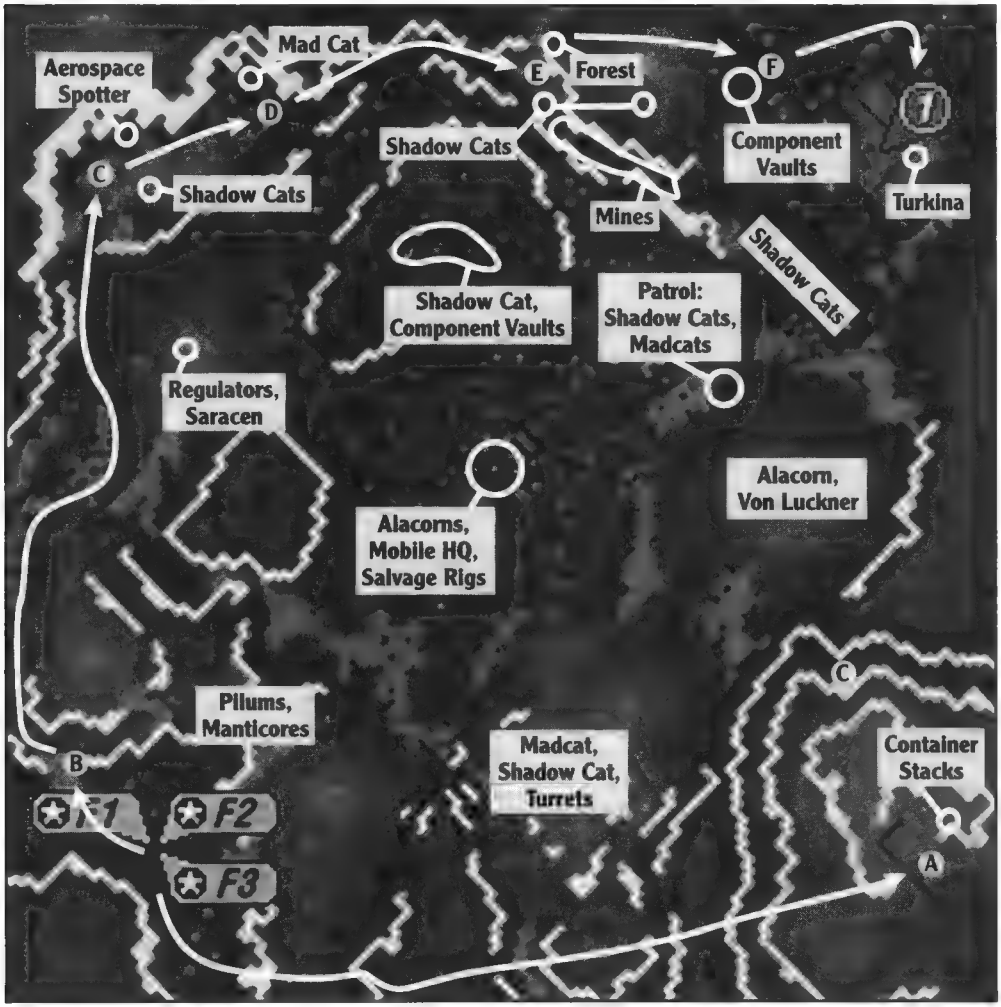
Overview

There are three main points of conflict in this mission: the base at Point C, the base at Point E, and the base at Point 1. The middle portion of the map has many stationary defenders as well as a moving patrol of 'Mechs, including three *Shadow Cats* and two *Mad Cats*. It's best to stay out of their way.

The recommended strategy for this mission is to send your forces north along the western edge of the map. The patrolling Clan 'Mechs don't come very far west, so this path allows you to avoid them altogether.

Salvage includes:

- Southwest Container Stacks: 8 Heavy Flamers, 5 Clan ER-PPCs, 3 Clan Gauss Rifles, 3 Clan Heavy Ultra Autocannons, 10 Clan LRM Racks, 5 Probes, 4 ECM, 3 Clan Advanced Sensors
- Northeast Component Vaults: 4 Thunderbolts, 2 Large X-Pulse Lasers



Battle Map of Mission 3-3

- North Central Component Vaults: 4 Rail Guns
- Northwest Component Warehouses: 1 Clan Advanced Sensor, 5 Clan SRM Racks, 1 Clan Heavy LB-X Autocannon, 2 Clan LB-X Autocannons
- Salvage Rigs: 2 Clan ER-PPCs, 1 Rail Gun, 1 Thunderbolt

Recommended Forces

Your drop weight for this mission is 420 tons. This should give you enough working room to bring a strong Force Group.

Use Medium to Heavy 'Mechs for this mission, but avoid 'Mechs with speeds under 21 m/sec. You'll also want to bring a light Jump 'Mech.

Medium and long-range weapons will be the most useful: Clan ER-PPCs, Large X-Pulse Lasers, and the like are best. You also have two Large Artillery Strikes, three Small Artillery Strikes, two Camera Drones, and three Sensor Probes.

Strategy Blueprint

When your forces are dropped, immediately send your light Jump 'Mech east along the path toward Point A. Stay south. Your 'Mech should be able to approach Point A undetected.

At Point A, take over all of the Container Stacks, then bring your Jump 'Mech back to the starting point.

Figure 13-9. Use a Camera Drone to reveal the contents of the base at Point 1.

Next, you'll use your Camera Drones and Air Strikes to soften up the buildings at Point 1 on the Battle Map. First, deploy a Camera Drone directly on the Point 1 marker on the mini-map. This reveals the Engine Drills, the Gantries, and also a *Turkina W.* Deploy a second Camera Drone on the northeast edge of the area uncovered by the first drone. This should reveal the Research Complex.

You have two Large Artillery Strikes and three Small Artillery Strikes. Use a Large Artillery on each of the two easternmost Engine Drills. Use a Small Artillery Strike on the Research Complex, and the others on the Engine Drills.

Now you're ready to begin the main assault. Group your 'Mechs together and head northwest as shown on the Battle Map. Destroy the forest blocking your way at Point B.

Continue north to the base at Point C along the path indicated, being sure to stay far enough to the west to avoid detection by enemy units.

Gather your forces just outside the base at Point C. Two *Shadow Cats* are on patrol at the base. Destroy both, aided by explosive tanks if possible.

Watch for an Aerospace Spotter arriving from the north. As soon as you see it, destroy it, even if you haven't taken out the *Shadow Cats* yet.

Once the *Shadow Cats* and Aerospace Spotter have been taken care of, head northeast through the base as shown on the Battle Map. You'll soon encounter four Component Warehouses. Begin capturing them, but watch for a *Mad Cat* that will appear from the northeast. Engage the *Mad Cat,* but be sure to stay to the southwest, as there are Missile Turrets just out of view.

Figure 13-10. The Mad Cat **is stationed among Missile Turrets near Point D.**

Once the *Mad Cat* is destroyed, either capture or destroy the Turret Control at Point D on the Battle Map.

Now that all immediate threats have been eliminated, destroy the northern Turret Power Generators near Point D and capture any remaining Component Warehouses.

Head northeast toward the small base at Point E. You'll encounter a few Fuel Trucks on the way, but you can ignore them.

As you approach the base, you're greeted by a *Shadow Cat.* Fortunately you've destroyed the Turret Power Generators, so the Cannon Turrets are off-line. Eliminate the *Shadow Cat* and enter the base.

Figure 13-11. The 'Mech Repair Bay is lightly guarded.

At this point, one or two *Shadow Cats* will likely approach from the north. Try to engage and destroy both of them before taking over the Repair Bay in the base.

Once you've eliminated the *Shadow Cats,* capture the Repair Bay and repair your 'Mechs.

When all of your 'Mechs have been repaired, destroy the forest just north of the base at Point E. Then send your 'Mechs through the newly created hole in the forest, moving them east toward Point F along the path shown on the Battle Map. Capture the two Component Vaults located at Point F, then head northeast.

Approach the base at Point 1, following the designated path. Destroy Pop-Up Turrets that appear as you advance. As soon as the nearby *Turkina* starts advancing on your forces, forget about the Turrets and concentrate on attacking it. The *Turkina* is

likely to pass close by a Factory as is approaches; if you blow up a Pipe Junction between Factories, thus detonating the Factory near the *Turkina,* you can severely damage it with the explosion. Finish off the *Turkina* with concentrated fire.

Once the *Turkina* is gone, destroy the buildings near Point 1. Because you used your artillery strikes on these buildings at the start of the mission, destroying them now shouldn't take very long.

When the last building in the base is destroyed, you win the mission.

TIP *If you take too long destroying the buildings, the* Shadow Cats *stationed just southwest of the base will approach. Although you can most likely win this battle, you may lose a 'Mech or two. So hurry as you destroy the buildings near Point 1!*

Mission 3-4: Destroy Engine Drills

This is the last mission in *Desperate Measures,* and it's a fairly hard one. It requires good combat skills and the discipline to continually repair your 'Mechs.

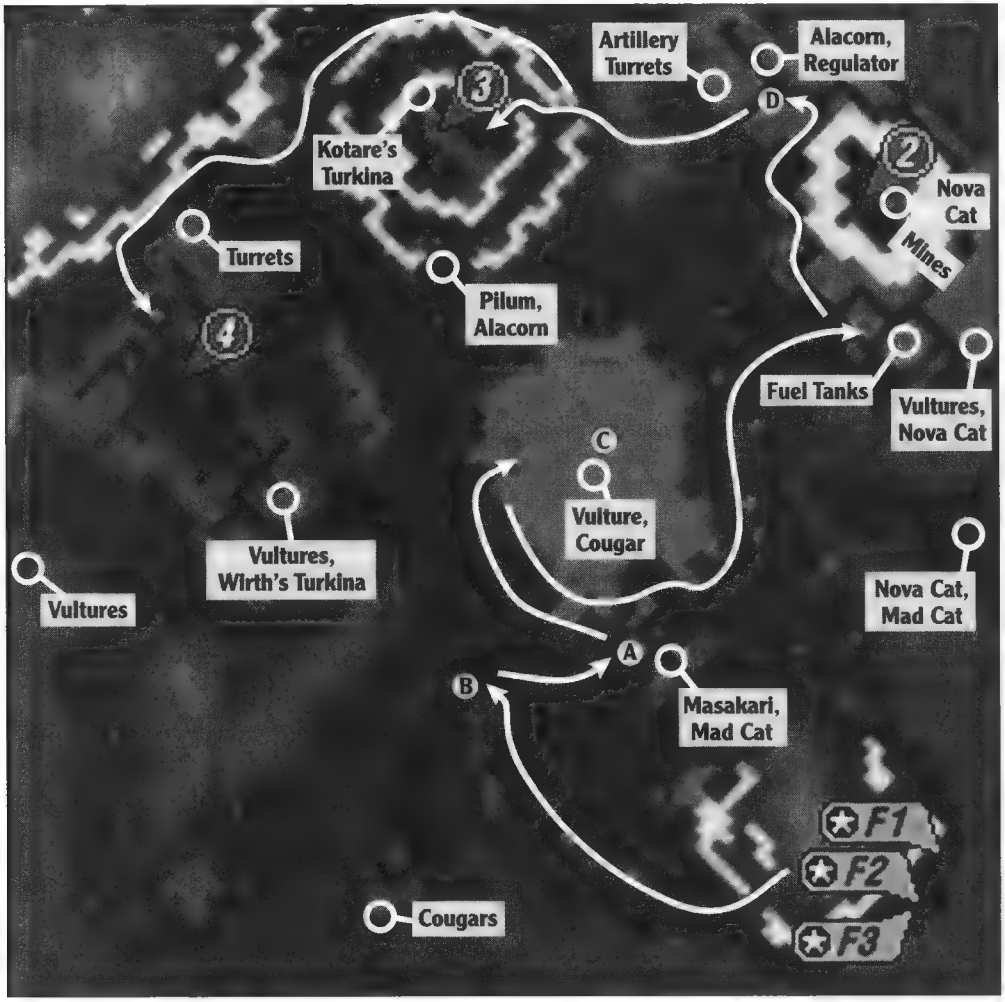
The mission difficulty is such that, even though you'll encounter three Repair Bays, we still recommend taking a Refit Truck. With the help of the Refit Truck, the mission should become manageable.

Your goals are as follows:

- Destroy hidden Vault Drill Group Alpha
- Destroy Vault Drill Group Beta
- Destroy Vault Drill Group Gamma
- Destroy Vault Drill Group Delta

Overview

This mission is reasonably hard. Each of the Vault Drills is fairly well protected. The recommended approach essentially *requires* you to take a Refit Truck. The enemy 'Mechs are pretty tough and tend to fight in groups, so having your 'Mechs close to or at 100 percent before each battle is key to completing the mission without casualties.



Battle Map of Mission 3-4

You can complete the objectives in any order, especially at the easier difficulty levels. In the strategy outlined here, though, you'll take the objectives in order, starting with the hidden Vault Drill in the center of the map and next attacking Points 2, 3, and then 4. This approach allows you to make use of the Artillery Turrets at Point 2 and to avoid dealing with the *Vultures* on the small island south of Point 4.

There is no salvage in this mission.

Recommended Forces

You're given 400 tons of drop weight, plus two Small Artillery Strikes and two Sensor Probes.

Take reasonably fast and sturdy 'Mechs (*Mad Cats, Thors,* and *Nova Cats*) with the usual array of long-range weapons such as Clan ER-PPCs, Clan LRM Racks, and Large X-Pulse Lasers. The mission is easiest if you take at least one Jump 'Mech, but it's not necessary.

A Refit Truck will prove invaluable. You'll be fighting a lot of tough 'Mechs in this mission, and you'll need constant repairs.

Figure 13-12. Walking up the hill reveals the Masakari **and** Mad Cat **near Point A.**

Strategy Blueprint

From the starting point, send your units to the top of the nearby hill to reveal some of the map. You should now be able to see the *Masakari* and *Mad Cat* stationed in the small base at Point A.

Send your 'Mechs to the southwest along the path shown on the Battle Map until you run into the wall that isolates the southeast corner of the map. Blast a hole in the wall and send your units through.

Send your units north toward Point B, but watch the mini-map carefully. At some point, the *Masakari* moves to attack. Once you start fighting the *Masakari,* the *Mad Cat* approaches as well, but you should've either destroyed or severely injured the *Masakari* by then.

When you've destroyed both enemy 'Mechs, take out the bridge at Point B.

TIP *The island connected by the Point B bridge contains three* Cougars, *as well as a 'Mech Repair Bay.*

Unless you failed to bring a Refit Truck, there's no real benefit to fighting the Cougars. *If you don't destroy the bridge, however, the* Cougars *will eventually head north and make a nuisance of themselves later in the mission. Because none of the* Cougars *are Jump-capable, taking out the bridge strands them on the island.*

Next, head east and take out the Turret Control at Point A, then proceed northwest to the large forest in the center of the map. The hidden Vault Drill is located in the middle of the forest (at Point C), guarded by a *Vulture* and a *Cougar.*

There's a path through the forest, located on the southwestern side. Send a 'Mech up the path to lure out the *Vulture* and *Cougar.* The enemy 'Mechs will chase your 'Mech out of the forest, and they'll be much easier to hit. When the enemy 'Mechs have been destroyed, head into the forest and destroy the Vault Drill at Point C.

Now send your units northeast along the path toward Point 2. Line your 'Mechs up behind the Fuel Tanks shown on the Battle Map. Be careful not to send them too far north, as there are minefields beyond the Fuel Tanks.

Send one 'Mech to the east until one or all of the two *Vultures* and *Nova Cat* stationed to the east start to move. Run your lone 'Mech back to join the others as soon as the enemy responds. When the enemy 'Mechs are close to the Fuel Tanks, destroy one of the Gas Tanks. The explosion will hopefully deal significant damage. Continue fighting until the three 'Mechs are destroyed, using the Refit Truck as necessary.

Next, send your forces north along the path toward Point D. As they pass by Point 2, the *Nova Cat* stationed there likely will attack. Destroy it.

As you approach the Point D base, the *Alacorn* and *Regulator* defending it attack. Destroy them while staying away from the Artillery Turrets guarding the southwest wall of the base.

Now send a Jump 'Mech into the base and take over the Turret Control at Point D. (If you don't have a Jump 'Mech, blasting a hole in the wall works too.) Send your units in, capture the 'Mech Repair Bay at Point D, and repair your 'Mechs.

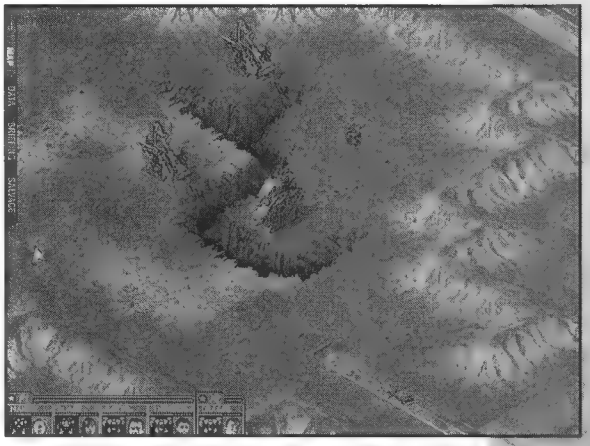


Figure 13-13. The Vault Drills near Point 2 are surrounded by ridges and guarded by a Nova Cat.

Send your forces southeast and destroy the three Vault Drills at Point 2.

TIP *The drills are surrounded by a ridge, and you may not be able to see all three of them. If you have a Jump 'Mech, send it over the ridge to expose the drills. If you don't have a Jump 'Mech, send your forces around to the east of Point 3. From there they can walk to the drills. However, this path is mined. Be sure to fire at the ground before sending your 'Mechs in.*

A *Mad Cat* and *Nova Cat* (located on the small island just south of Point 2) power up as soon as the last drill is destroyed. Head back to the base at Point D and wait for these newcomers near the Artillery Turrets. Allow the Turrets to help you win the battle, then repair again in the Repair Bay.

Figure 13-14. The drills near Point 3 are protected by Kotare's Turkina.

Send your 'Mechs west toward Point 3, as shown on the Battle Map, and pause on the hilltop along the way. This region is surrounded by Perimeter Alarms and camouflaged Pop-Up Turrets. However, as long as the Perimeter Alarms aren't activated, the Pop-Up Turrets remain dormant, as do the *Pilum* and *Alacorn* stationed nearby (as long as you don't get too close). This area is also patrolled by Kotare's *Turkina*. Luckily, the *Turkina* also won't attack unless you get very close to it or if the Perimeter Alarms are set off.

Destroy any nearby Perimeter Alarms and wait until the *Turkina* is nowhere in sight. Then head west toward Point 3 and destroy the two Vault Drills located there.

Now, retrace your steps back to the hilltop and head west along the very top of the map, destroying Perimeter Alarms as you go. Continue toward Point 4 on the Battle Map.

As you approach the Point 4 base, you'll note a battery of Missile Turrets and Artillery Turrets located in the northern corner of the base, so approach with caution. Destroy the two Artillery Turrets from long range, but ignore the Missile Turrets.

Send a lone Jump 'Mech around to the northwest side of the base, as indicated on the Battle Map. Jump over the wall and capture the two Turret Controls just inside the wall. (If you lack a Jump 'Mech, bring all your 'Mechs and simply blast a hole in the wall.)

Now bring the rest of your 'Mechs along the same path the Jump 'Mech followed, and have them blast a hole in the wall.

Figure 13-15. Destroy the Artillery Turrets, then send a 'Mech in to capture the Turret Control.

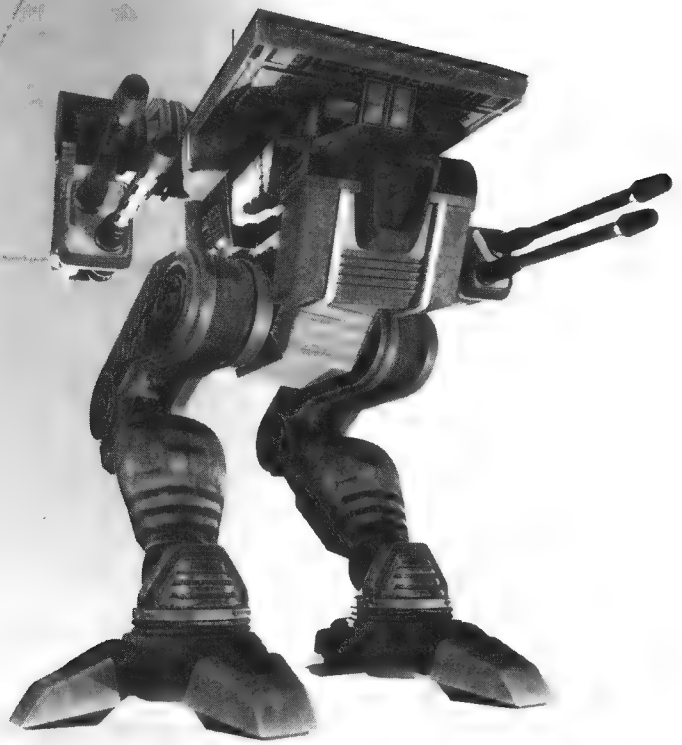
There's a 'Mech Repair Bay located in the northern corner of the base. Capture it and repair any damaged 'Mechs.

Three Vault Drills are located at Point 4, in the center of the base. Approach them with your entire Force Group. As you start to destroy them, Wirth's *Turkina* and two *Vultures* power up and head toward your forces.

At this point, you can choose to stop firing on the Vault Drills and fight, or continue to destroy the Vault Drills. Because the mission ends when the last Vault Drill is destroyed, concentrating on taking them out is the easiest way to win the mission.

However, if you choose to fight it out, we recommend retreating back into your captured Turrets to make the fight much easier.

Again, you win when the last Vault Drill is destroyed.



CHAPTER 14

MULTIPLAYER MECHCOMMANDER TIPS

After beating *MechCommander*'s single-player campaign, you'll probably want to explore its multiplayer options. This chapter gives you a few pointers on getting started in multiplayer *MechCommander,* and how to get a leg up on the competition.

THE ESSENCE OF MULTIPLAYER MECHCOMMANDER

In most games featuring both single-player and multiplayer modes, it's striking how different the two forms of play can be. Often, skills honed in single-player mode are somewhat related to those needed in multiplayer games, but the complete skill set is not tested. The result? You enter the multiplayer arena thinking you've got the game mastered but instead get thoroughly trounced.

MechCommander is different, however, in that the skills you learned while playing the campaign will serve you in good stead for multiplayer missions. Sure, there are a few extra nuances when you're playing a real human opponent, but by and large you already know how to play a multiplayer game if you're familiar with single-player action.

Here are some key differences between single-player and multiplayer games that you should watch for.

Lack of Predictability

Humans aren't as predictable as the computer-controlled forces in the single-player campaign. This is an obvious statement, but you need to consider it thoroughly before engaging in a multiplayer fray. Humans are capable of luring your forces into traps the same way you lured computer-controlled forces into traps; they're capable of retreating and then suddenly going on the offensive or attacking with diversionary forces while the main force attacks elsewhere.

Just as unpredictable will be the enemy 'Mechs. You'll see *Hunchbacks* with LRMs, *Hollander IIs* with Flamers, and *Mad Cats* with Gauss Rifles. Enemy forces are going to be as varied as the units you fielded in the campaign game.

Expect the unexpected while facing human opponents or else you'll be in for a rude surprise.

Improved Enemy Tactics

There are several techniques covered in Chapter 5 that you, as the human player, constantly used during the single-player campaign—but your enemies didn't. We're talking about things like concentrating all your fire on one enemy at once, or retreating damaged forces to the rear of a conflict. Only the very best computer-controlled pilots use these tactics, but *any* human player with a modicum of skill will use them.

In other words, while playing human players, expect to have your own tricks used against you.

Equal Footing

In single-player missions you're usually asked to fight against seemingly insurmountable odds. The enemy has more 'Mech and vehicle tonnage than you do. You're able to prevail, however, because the enemy forces tend to be scattered and poorly coordinated.

In multiplayer games, on the other hand, you typically start with a roughly equal amount of tonnage as your foe(s)—but there's the possibility of even greater danger, because your opponent can coordinate and manage that tonnage very skillfully. The upshot is a different sort of game, one in which you must match strategy with strategy instead of expecting to capitalize on the enemy's poor awareness.

Additionally, we recommend a handicap in the Inner Sphere's favor of about 20 to 30 percent more Resource Points when playing Inner Sphere against Clan technology. The reason? Clan technology is inherently superior, and the Inner Sphere needs the additional RP edge to remain competitive.

The Need for Teamwork

If you're playing a team game, you'll be surprised at how easy it is to lose track of what your teammate is up to. This is especially true on the Internet, where you can't just talk to your teammate as you would in a face-to-face LAN setting.

If you don't know your teammate, and extensive coordination and planning is logistically difficult, either keep your forces close to those of your partner to maximize fire support, or develop a simple strategy. Examples of simple strategies would include:

"You attack from one side, and I'll attack from the other."

"You defend our base, and I'll attack theirs."

"At the two-minute mark, we'll both charge the hill regardless of where we are."

If you're familiar with your teammate you can develop even better strategies, but if you're playing with an anonymous stranger you can get a lot of mileage out of these tried and proven plans.

Patience Required

There's an anecdote about two master swordsmen who agreed to a duel, then stood facing each other for hours waiting for the other to make the first move. Neither would make that move, so the duel was called off. The point isn't that the swordsmen were foolish, but rather, that they were disciplined. Both swordsmen knew that they'd put themselves at a disadvantage by making the first move, so they decided not to make that move at any cost.

Take a cue from the swordsmen and be patient. *MechCommander* isn't a fast action game where your reflexes can bail you out even though you walked into a stupid situation. If you wander your 'Mechs through a field of enemy Turrets, attack four heavy 'Mechs with three medium-sized ones, or expose your forces to needless fire by charging them across a bridge at the enemy, you'll lose. Learn to match strength to weakness—and if the situation doesn't look advantageous, run.

Container Stacks

The one physical change from the campaign game is the Container Stack. In the campaign game, they hold salvage, but salvage is not that useful for you in a multiplayer battle. In multiplayer games, the Container Stacks hold fire support missions. Each time you capture a Container Stack, there's a random chance of you getting a small or large artillery strike, or Sensor Probe. The stacks regenerate and can be captured again over time, so defending them or denying them to the enemy is a major tactic in multiplayer games. Every time the Stack is captured, the kind of fire support mission generated is randomly determined. In missions where fire support missions are not pre-set there is a limit of five of any kind of strike. Camera Drones aren't active in multiplayer games.

Scouting

Even more than in the single-player campaign game, it's important to reveal as much terrain as possible in multiplayer games. Your enemy is capable of feints and misdirection here, so having warning of his plans is essential to your success. Additionally, many of the multiplayer maps have Turret groups, Repair Bays, Container Stacks, and other useful items scattered throughout them. Scouting forward not only gives you an advantage in planning, but also can help you gain resources.

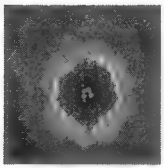
Understand the Game

Each scenario is different and presents different challenges. In the Arena you're just expected to fight, while in Capture the Base you have to take over an enemy stronghold,

and in King of the Hill you need to conquer a Base HQ. Understanding the game you're playing is pivotal and prevents you from making stupid tactical mistakes.

Here's a look at the games you're likely to play.

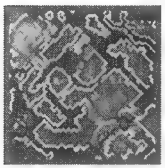
Arena



The Arena map is all about pure, unmitigated combat. The combat takes place in an enclosed area and can feature any amount of tonnage. The last 'Mech standing wins. From a tactical standpoint this is the simplest scenario.

TIP *The Arena is a great place to try out new strategies or refine old ones. If an opponent can consistently beat you in the Arena, you need to figure out what he or she is doing that you aren't.*

Capture Base



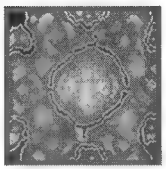
In this scenario, you possess a fortified base and so does your foe. The trick is to capture the enemy's Base HQ while holding onto yours. Complicating the matter is the mazelike terrain, which is highly conducive to jump-capable 'Mechs.

The "locked" variant of this mission pits an Inner Sphere player with 360,000 Resource Points against a Clan player with 300,000.

TIP *The terrain in this scenario is no laughing matter; jump 'Mechs do indeed have more versatility on this map.*

There are several feasible strategies. You can divide your forces in half, assigning some to offense and some to defense; you can leave everyone on defense and hope the enemy is foolish enough to attack; you can try to sneak into the enemy base instead of taking it by force. The success of your strategy will largely depend on who you're playing, and what he or she is trying to do. Even more so than in the other maps, Capture Base has many useful items sitting outside *the two bases. Scouting is very helpful here.*

King of the Hill



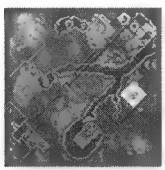
King of the Hill is a classic multiplayer challenge. A Base HQ sits at the top of the hill, while various contenders start out arrayed along the map's perimeter. There's always a mission timer—15 minutes is default—and the owner of the HQ when the timer runs out is the winner.

The "locked" variant of this game pits an Inner Sphere player with 270,000 Resource Points against a Clan player with 210,000.

TIP *One strategy is to ignore the hill until the last minute or so. Conserve your forces and pick away at enemies, but don't engage in full-scale combat that could weaken your forces. Then, make a rush as the timer runs out. The six Container Stacks ranged around the outside of the map make this an especially tempting tactic because you can build up a supply of artillery to use before assaulting. Unfortunately, by using this tactic you end up allowing the enemy to capture the Turret groups arrayed around the top of the hill.*

The other strategy is to take the hill as soon as possible and try to hold it.

Many Bases

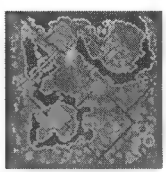


In this scenario, your goal is to have control of five bases simultaneously, out of a total of six. The mission is timed; in the locked variant, the Inner Sphere player has 450,000 Resource Points and the Clan player has 360,000.

TIP *The two basic strategies for this scenario are to go for speed—taking over bases and then running away—or power, where your strategy is to attack first and capture bases later.*

A lack of speedy 'Mechs can frustrate you to no end in this scenario. Don't sacrifice speed, even if power is your main goal! Otherwise your opponent will never be there when you try to fight.

Power Surge



In this timed mission, one side must protect four Power Generators while the other tries to destroy six. In the locked variant, the Inner Sphere player gets 480,000 Resource Points and the Clan player gets 450,000.

TIP *Again, speed is vital for both sides. The defender has to protect multiple Power Generators and needs the mobility to get from one to the other. The attacker needs speed because, without it, his plans become transparent and are easily defended.*

With a good plan, smooth execution, and a bit of luck, the attacking player occasionally can win this one without fighting an enemy 'Mech.

NEW MAPS FOR DESPERATE MEASURES

Desperate Measures features more than 30 new multiplayer maps—far too many to describe in detail. However, these maps feature common elements that we *can* discuss.

Most of these missions can be lumped into one of three categories: Melees, Assault and Defense, and Capture and Hold. A few missions may combine elements from two of these game types or throw in a curveball of some sort, but these three classifications cover most of the maps in the game.

Melees

Melees are all-out battles. The only real requirement is to obliterate all enemy forces.

Your strategy and choice of 'Mechs for these maps should be dictated partially by the map, and partially by what you expect from the enemy. If the map has lots of islands, for example, you might want to load up on Jump-capable 'Mechs with long-range weapons so you can jump to an island and pelt the enemy from afar. Or, if you expect your opponent to try to fight at close range, you can either take speedy 'Mechs to foil that plan, or try to beat him at his own game by using lots of heavily armored 'Mechs and heavy weapons, such as Heavy Autocannons.

The prime rules for battles of this sort are to keep your forces together and to concentrate fire on one enemy unit at a time. The chief exceptions to this rule are when you're trying to distract or lure the enemy with part of your force, or when you want a small, fast 'Mech to break away from the main group and concentrate on capturing Container Stacks.

TIP *It's often a good idea—regardless of the game type—to have a small, fast 'Mech that wanders the map apart from your main group, revealing maps and capturing Container Stacks. Later, when these tasks are no longer necessary, this small 'Mech can be used to harass or distract the main enemy force, or it can be re-integrated with your main Force Group.*

As always, massive weapons dealing massive damage are better than small weapons dealing minimal damage. And remember that although heavy 'Mechs are usually good fighters, fast 'Mechs are also potent, as they can dictate the terms of battle by running away or fighting at the distance they choose. *Mad Cats* represent the ideal combination of speed and power.

Assault and Defense

Many of the new maps place both you and your opponent in charge of a base or a set of structures, and charge you with both the protection of your structures and the destruction or capture of the enemy's structures. For these sorts of missions, you have three basic options, each of which can be effective.

Playing Defensively

The first and most conservative option is to play defense almost exclusively. With almost all of your forces on defense, you can fight the enemy from a position of strength, often assisted by friendly walls or Turrets.

You can either play pure defense, or have most of your forces play defense and assign one or more small units to harass the enemy, picking away at weak spots and destroying anything that's left undefended. These small units also can serve as scouts and capture Container Stacks.

We recommend that you play defensively during your first few attempts at this sort of mission. Of course, the degree to which you commit to defense must vary according to circumstances. For example, if your holdings are widely spread out and difficult to defend, playing pure defense is tough, because the enemy can attack in spots where you can't immediately respond. In these cases, you might want to play with a more offensive posture.

In missions where your holdings are concentrated in a small area or are heavily fortified, on the other hand, playing defense can be great. Just be aware that if both players are highly defensive, the battle may become a boring stalemate as each waits for the other to attack.

Splitting Your Forces

Another tactic is to split your forces evenly between offense and defense. This tactic can work well unless the enemy base is extremely compact, in which case enemy defenders can usually overwhelm your divided forces.

If you choose to split your forces up, you'll probably want to go with fast 'Mechs. This is because they'll need to be able to escape if the enemy keeps his entire force together in a single army, and half of your force runs into this army.

Playing Offensively

The final tactic is to play pure offense, leaving only a token defensive force to slow down the enemy. This tactic can be extremely effective, unless the enemy is playing pure defense and has lots of emplaced defenses on his side. Still, even in that circumstance, your aggression can sometimes catch the enemy off guard.

Playing pure offense is a lot of fun, and it also can be the most effective tactic—depending, of course, on how your opponent likes to play. Experiment with offensive game plans, and note how your opponent deals with them. Depending on your rate of success, you'll either want to stick with your offensive tactics or shift to a more defensive posture for future games.

Capture and Hold

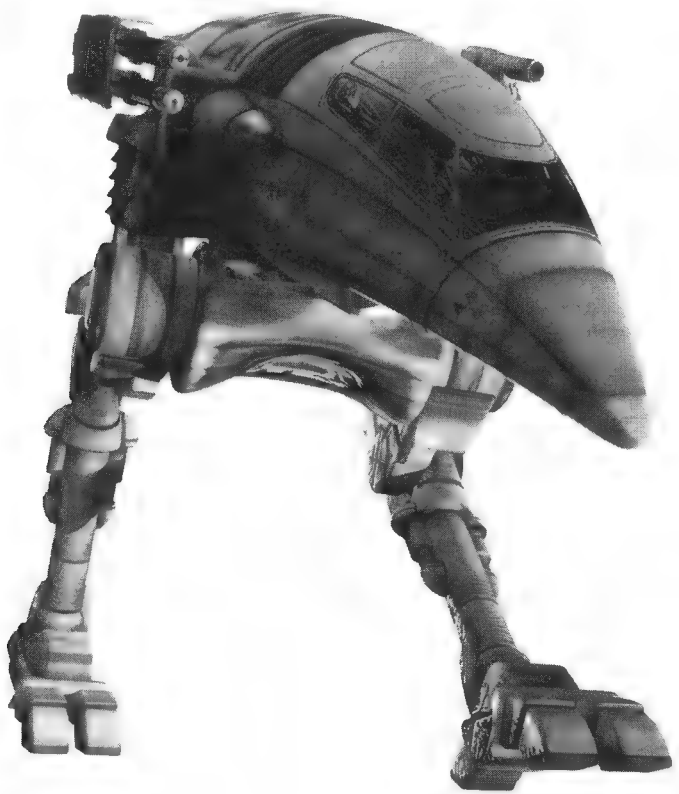
The final common mission type is the "Capture and Hold" mission, in which neither you nor the enemy starts the mission in control of contested buildings or resources, but both sides must attempt to claim them. Often these missions are timed.

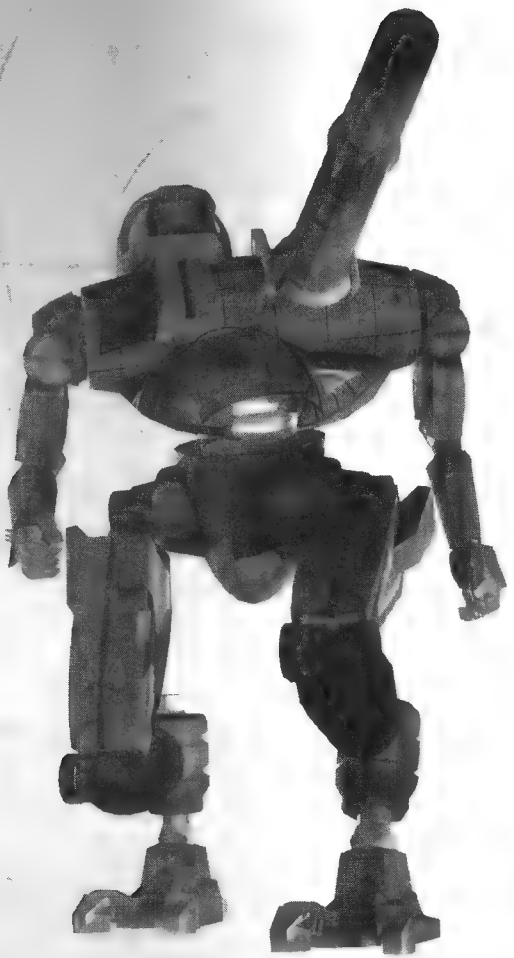
In these missions, your biggest decision is usually whether to capture the contested structures right from the outset, to wait until time has nearly expired and *then* capture them, or to fight the enemy as if it were a pure combat mission and only later capture the contested structures, when the enemy no longer has the strength to resist.

Generally speaking, it's good to concentrate on combat first, and capture structures later. If you spread out your forces to capture each contested structure before engaging the enemy, you'll spread them so thinly that they're vulnerable to attack from more concentrated forces. So it's often best to locate the enemy, beat them in combat, and then assume control of the contested structures once the enemy can no longer fight effectively.

TIP *Usually, you should conquer only as many contested structures as are necessary to win. For example, if there are five contested structures, you should assume control of three. This is the minimum needed to win, and by capturing and holding only this many structures, you won't have to spread your forces as thinly as if you tried to hold all five.*

The terrain or terms of victory can change this strategy, of course. In some missions, for example, you'll lose if the enemy controls all contested structures simultaneously, regardless of the amount of time remaining. In this situation, you'll need to control at least one structure at all times, or risk defeat. You'd probably do well to use a more fluid strategy in this sort of mission, attacking multiple structures simultaneously with divided forces.





CHAPTER 15
THE MISSION EDITOR

Included with *MechCommander: Gold* is a powerful, fully featured Mission Editor. The Mission Editor contains extensive Help files that assist you in creating new missions, but we thought we'd synthesize some of the essentials into this chapter. Read on to get a jump-start on mission building.

TIP *Refer to the Help files for detailed advice on specific tools. We don't cover every tool in this chapter; rather, the emphasis is on getting you started and explaining some of the more difficult tools.*

THE ESSENTIALS

There are a few essentials you must learn if you want to build *any* type of mission, be it single-player or multiplayer. We'll look at single-player-specific and multiplayer-specific concepts later. For now, here's a look at what you need to do when building *both* mission types.

Getting Started

Launch the Mission Editor by selecting it from your Start menu. You're immediately presented with a choice: Multiplayer Mission Editor or Solo Mission Editor. Pick whichever you want to build.

Next, choose either New Mission or Edit Mission. Since you don't have any saved missions, pick New Mission.

Now you'll see a dialog box (Figure 15-1) that lets you adjust the basic properties of the map. It includes the following features:

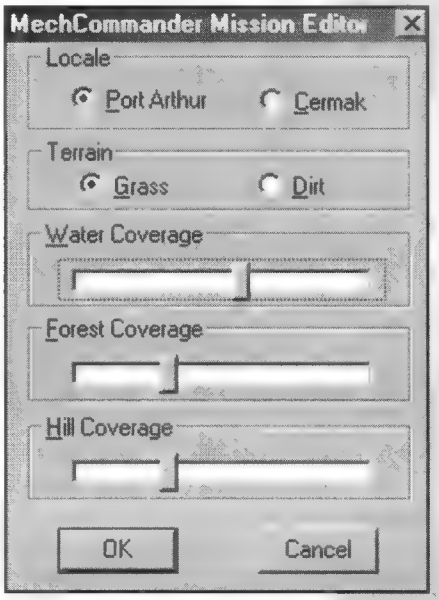


Figure 15-1. Use this dialog box to adjust the basic parameters of your new map.

- *Locale:* Port Arthur or Cermak changes which planet your mission takes place on. This just affects what the planet looks like, not how the mission will play.
- *Terrain:* Again, this is a cosmetic issue. On Port Arthur the two choices are Grass and Dirt, whereas Sand and Ash are your two options on Cermak.
- *Water, Forest, and Hill Coverage Sliders:* These sliders affect the percentage of the map to be covered by each terrain type. They are to some degree linked; for example, if you maximize the Forest or Hill coverage, you'll automatically minimize Water coverage—because if the whole map is covered by forest or hills, there's just no room for any water.

Adjust these sliders to your liking, then select OK.

TIP *The three sliders let you adjust the map in a very general sense, but you have no control over where each terrain type is located. If you have strong ideas about how a map should look, you'll probably end up changing everything anyway—so just minimize the three sliders by putting them all the way to the left. This starts you out with a "blank map" that's easy to work with.*

Adjust the Terrain

By itself, a map is not a mission. For it to become a mission it must feature something for the player to do (i.e. objectives) and places for the player's forces to be deployed (i.e. starting points). However, the map itself is an extremely important facet of a mission, and it's probably the first thing you'll want to work on. Here are some tips for molding it to your liking.

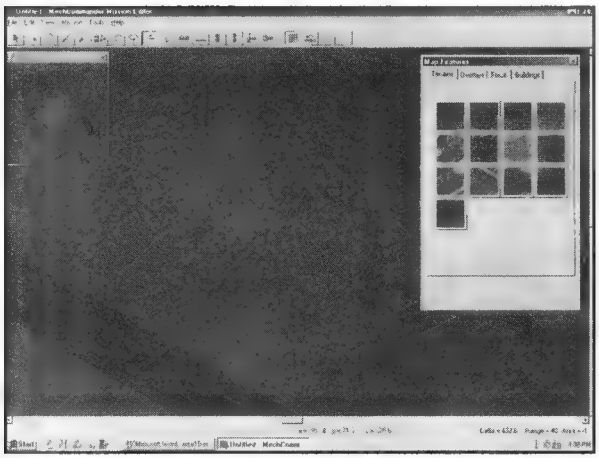


Figure 15-2. Adjust terrain to form mountains and valleys.

Macro-Level Adjustments: Hills, Water, Elevation

The first way of adjusting terrain is to raise and lower it, thus creating hills and valleys (Figure 15-2). Do this by selecting a square on the map and then pressing the up or down arrow, or by selecting the Raise Vertex or Lower Vertex buttons on the Standard Toolbar

TIP

You can also select the Raise Vertex or Lower Vertex buttons while no square is selected. This turns the cursor into a tool that you can use to raise or lower any point on the map quickly, just by clicking on it.

Terrain that has been lowered as far as possible will automatically fill with water.

The other way to effect large changes on the map is to select items from the Map Features palette (Figure 15-3).

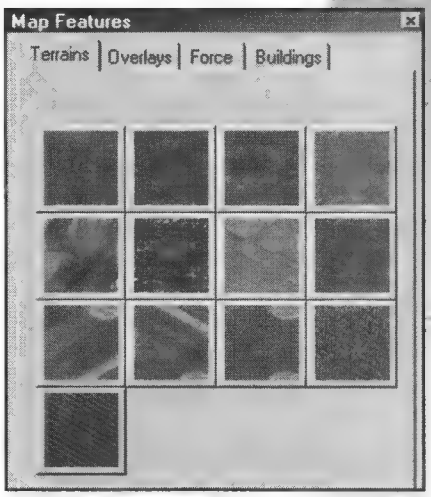


Figure 15-3. Select anything you want from the Map Features palette, then paint it onto the map.

The first tab of the Map Features Palette, entitled Terrains, allows you to paint different terrain types onto the map. Most of these terrain types are purely cosmetic; they don't haven any real effect on the map's topography, just on how it looks. For example, if you replace grass with dirt, there's no real effect. Water and cliffs do have a significant effect, however, which is as follows:

- Add *Cliffs,* and the terrain elevation is likely to change. If you don't put cliffs on a border between two distinct levels of elevation, there will be an automatic two-level elevation adjustment. (Try playing with this tool to get a sense of how it works.)
- *Water* flattens out the terrain square you're applying it to, as well as the terrain in a nine-tile radius around the selected square.

The second tab of the Map Features Palette is called Overlays, and it includes things like trees, rocks, walls, and roads of various descriptions. These items are called Overlays because they don't completely eradicate whatever terrain is beneath them; they just go *over* that terrain. However, you should realize that most of these selections—including roads, walls, runways and bridges—will, to some degree, flatten the terrain they're placed on. That's simply to make things match up: if terrain wasn't automatically flattened, for example, two sections of road wouldn't be able to connect properly.

TIP *Forest and rocks are the only Overlays that don't flatten the terrain beneath them. However, forest placed on a steep slope doesn't always look right; there will be gaps, as the various sections of forest don't match up perfectly.*

Many Overlays have multiple variants—for example, there are several types of Forest. Keep clicking on a particular square, "painting" the same Overlay repeatedly, to cycle through these different variants.

The third tab on the Map Features palette is Force. It allows you to place all the items from the Overlays palette, but with two differences. First, it lets you place the Overlays *without* affecting the terrain beneath. This sometimes leads to visual strangeness, like if you place a section of Wall on top of the water—but it gives you the power to create that strangeness, if you want to.

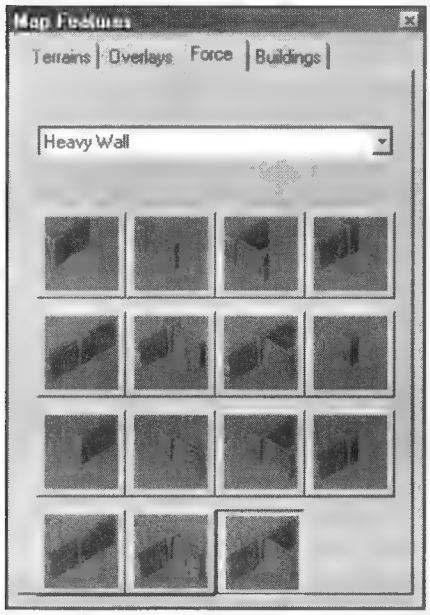


Figure 15-4. You can select the exact piece that you want to place on the map with the Force tab.

Also, it allows you to place any variant of an Overlay that you want. For example, Heavy Walls come in a vast array of different shapes (Figure 15-4). With the Force tab you can pick out the exact section of wall you want. This is key if you want, say, a T-shaped wall section in a spot where the regular Overlay tab will only let you place a regular wall.

Minor Adjustments

Use the elevation adjustment commands and the Map Features palette to thoroughly adjust the physical topography of the land. You'll probably continue to tweak the landscape as you proceed through later stages of mission design, either to repair some deficiency in the map, to add a new element (such as a new path for players to follow), or simply to make things look "right." You'll probably make these minor adjustments right up until the time you've finished the mission.

Add Structures

After the natural topography of the map is largely in place, you'll probably want to add structures.

Structures are placed with the help of the Map Features palette's fourth tab, Buildings. As with other Map Features, you can simply select buildings and drop them onto the map. There are, however, a couple of things to know first.

Many structures are only significant as obstacles. Office buildings, for example, have no value beyond their ability to decorate and to take up space. Other buildings, especially those with real tactical significance (like Turrets and Turret Control towers)

belong to a side. After selecting these structures but *before* placing them on the map, you can select Team 1, Team 2, or Neutral from a set of radio buttons (Figure 15-5). This determines who owns the structures at the mission's start.

Figure 15-5. Select which team will own the structure, using the three radio buttons.

NOTE In a single-player game, Team 1 is the human player. Any structures assigned to Team 1 will be "friendly," while structures assigned to Team 2 are "enemy." Neutral structures are owned by neither side.

In a multiplayer game, Team 1 is the Inner Sphere player and Team 2 is the Clan player.

After a building has been placed, you can right-click on it and adjust certain properties. For example, some buildings can be rotated 90 degrees. Others can have their alliance changed—for example, you can switch a Turret from Player 1 control to Player 2 control.

You can also give a damaged, war-torn look to structures with the hammer icon in the Standard Toolbar, or the Damage command under the Tools menu. To repair this damage, use the Repair command under the Tools menu, or the wrench icon on the Standard Toolbar.

You can link buildings by selecting Link Buildings from the Tools menu (or by clicking the chain link icon on the Standard Toolbar), then clicking on the buildings you wish to link. The following list explains what structures can be linked, and what effect linking has on those structures.

- Link a Sensor Control to Sensors. Then, whatever player captures the Sensor Control gets the benefit of the Sensors.
- Link a Gate Control to Gates. Any player in charge of the Gate Control controls the Gates.
- Link a Turret Control to Turrets. A player in charge of the Turret Control then controls the Turrets.
- Link Main Power or Auxiliary Power to a Turret Control, then link that Turret Control to some Turrets. Now the Turret Control has power over the Turrets (as usual), but with the added touch that the Turrets will go dead if the Power building is destroyed.

Linking structures allows you to add lots of tactical options for players. For example, linked Turret Control towers and Turrets encourage players to figure out a way to assume control of the Turret Control instead of simply blowing up Turrets.

Add Drop Zones

You can select Drop Zones under the Tools menu, and then paint them onto the map like an Overlay. Every mission requires Drop Zones, which are simply the locations where player-controlled 'Mechs are placed at the mission's start. In a single-player game you only need to provide one Drop Zone, though you should provide more if the mission requires lots of 'Mechs.

Multiplayer games, on the other hand, require three Drop Zones for each player.

Adjust Settings

Each player needs to have their settings adjusted before the mission can be considered finished. In a multiplayer mission, select Settings-Team 1 or Settings-Team 2 from the Mission menu to adjust settings. In single-player missions, the Mission menu has only one option for the lone human player, called Settings.

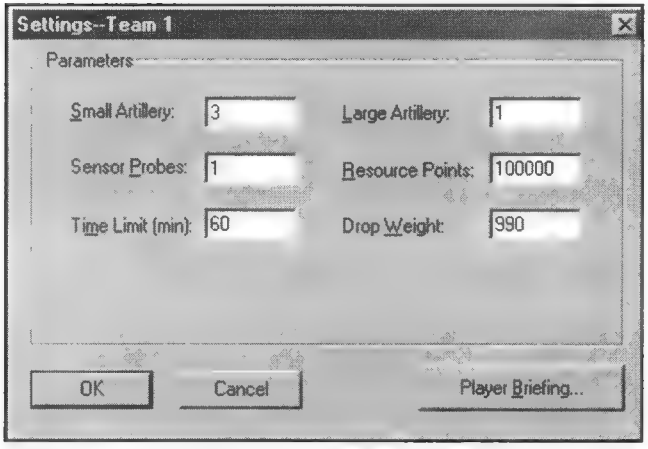


Figure 15-6. The Settings menu lets you adjust a number of key settings for each player.

As Figure 15-6 illustrates, the Settings menu allows you to adjust each player's Drop Weight, Resource Points, Time Limit (for timed missions), and the availability of Artillery Strikes and Sensor Probes.

TIP *The single-player Settings menu also allows the use of Camera Drones, and lets you select whether the player has access to the Inner Sphere or Clan technology base.*

Also, the Settings menu has a button labeled Player Briefing. Click this button to type in the briefing this player will see prior to mission launch. The player briefing should include a mission title, a list of objectives that the player must achieve, and a

general description of the mission. Optionally, you can also fill in the Tactical Warnings and Tactical Notices section to give the player additional tips.

In a multiplayer mission, be sure to adjust the mission settings for *both* sides.

DESIGNING MULTIPLAYER MISSIONS

Once you've laid out a map and decorated it with the appropriate terrain, features, and structures, as well as adjusted player Settings and assigned Drop Zones for both sides, you're well on the way to having a complete multiplayer mission. Just a few more elements are necessary to make your mission complete.

Write a Description

Multiplayer missions need a description that briefly characterizes the mission. Writing a mission description is as simple as selecting Description from the Mission menu, and typing in whatever you want the player(s) to see.

Note that the description is *not* the same as the player briefing. The briefing is a detailed list of an individual player's objectives, complete with warnings and tips. The description is seen by all players, and is merely a way for players to see what a mission's all about before actually playing it.

Adjust Objectives

Objectives are adjusted by selecting Objectives-Team 1 or Objectives-Team 2 from the Mission menu. Objectives are the "victory conditions" of the mission. When one of the players attains all of his primary objectives, he wins the mission.

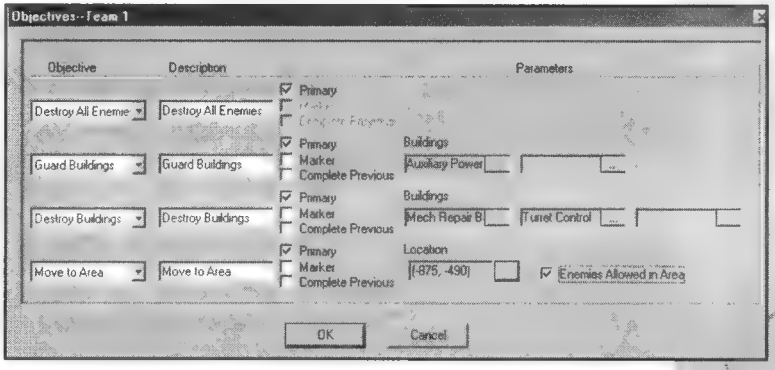


Figure 15-7. Each player can have up to four objectives.

Each player can have up to four objectives (Figure 15-7). The default objective for each player is "Destroy all Enemies." If you leave this as each player's only objective, the mission will be a simple beat-em-up in which the player that destroys all enemy units wins the game.

After adding an objective, you should type a slightly more descriptive version of the objective into the Description box following it. For example, instead of just "Destroy buildings," you should type "Destroy Auxiliary Generators in enemy base." This helps the player understand what, exactly, must be destroyed.

You can also check three different boxes associated with each objective:

- If *Primary* is checked, the objective *must* be completed if the player is to win.
- If *Marker* is checked, the player will see a numerical marker on their Tactical Map (Mini-map) during the game, which shows them exactly where the objective is located. Leave this unchecked if you want the location of the objective to be secret.
- If *Complete Previous* is checked, the previous objective must be accomplished before the player can start on the objective they are currently pursuing.

Here's a look at the objectives you can set, other than the basic "Destroy all Enemies." Some of these objectives can only be used in single-player games; these are marked as such.

- *Destroy Units.* Single-player only. Forces the player to destroy particular enemy units. (Redundant if "Destroy all Enemies" is already a Primary objective.) After selecting this objective, click on the ellipsis button (the one with the "..." on it), and then select a unit on the map that the player must destroy. Repeat if you want several units to be destroyed. Up to three units can be targeted.
- *Destroy Buildings.* The player must destroy targeted buildings. Click the ellipsis button and then click on buildings to be destroyed. Up to three buildings can be targeted.
- *Guard Units.* Single-player only. Selected units must not be allowed to die. Again, use the ellipsis button to pick individual units.
- *Guard Buildings.* Selected structures must not be allowed to be destroyed. Use the ellipsis button to pick which structures.
- *Capture Units.* Single-player only. Selected units must be captured. Use the ellipsis button to select them.
- *Capture Buildings.* Selected buildings must be captured. Use the ellipsis button to select them.
- *Move to Area.* All units must move to specified area. Check the "Enemies Allowed in Area" box if you want enemies to be able to approach the area. Use the ellipsis button to specify the area.

In multiplayer games, the two players' objectives should either be identical, or mirror one another.

For example, with identical objectives, both players can be assigned to capture the same set of buildings. Optionally, both players' objectives can be to destroy all enemy units.

Mirrored objectives include a mission where Player 1 has to defend Base A and take over Base B, while Player 2 has to defend Base B and take over Base A.

TIP *Note that for missions where the objective is to capture specific base structures, the "Indestructible" buildings under the Multiplayer Objectives tab of the Map Features palette can be very useful. Indestructible Headquarters, for example, prevents one player from accidentally (or intentionally) blowing up a Headquarters, thus preventing either player from achieving his victory conditions by capturing or losing the Headquarters.*

DESIGNING SINGLE-PLAYER MISSIONS

Once you've tweaked the map, adjusted player settings, and placed a Drop Zone or three, your single-player mission is well underway. Here are the things you'll need to do to finish off that mission.

Add Units

When designing a single-player mission, an extra tab appears on the Map Features palette: Units (Figure 15-8). This allows you to place units on the map. Using radio buttons, you can select whether the unit will be friendly or hostile, and what variant (Armor, Jump, or Weapons) it is—if it's a 'Mech.

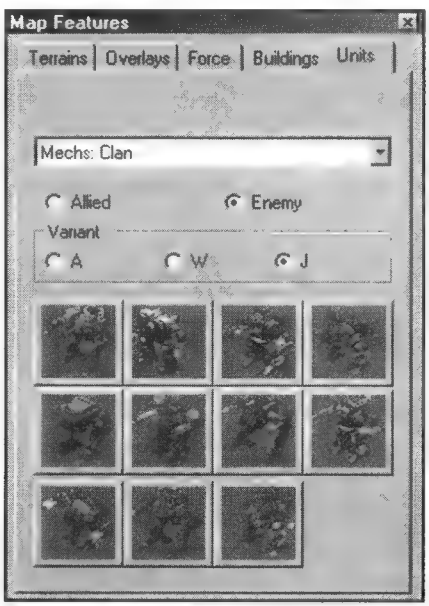


Figure 15-8. The Units tab lets you place units on the map.

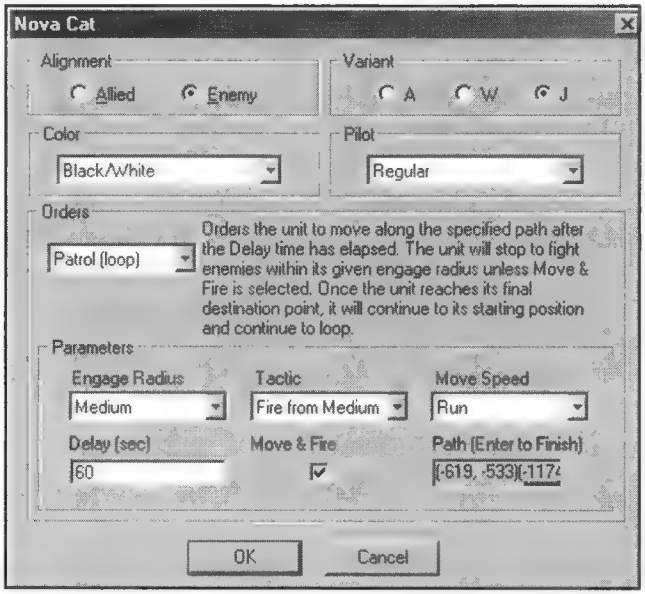


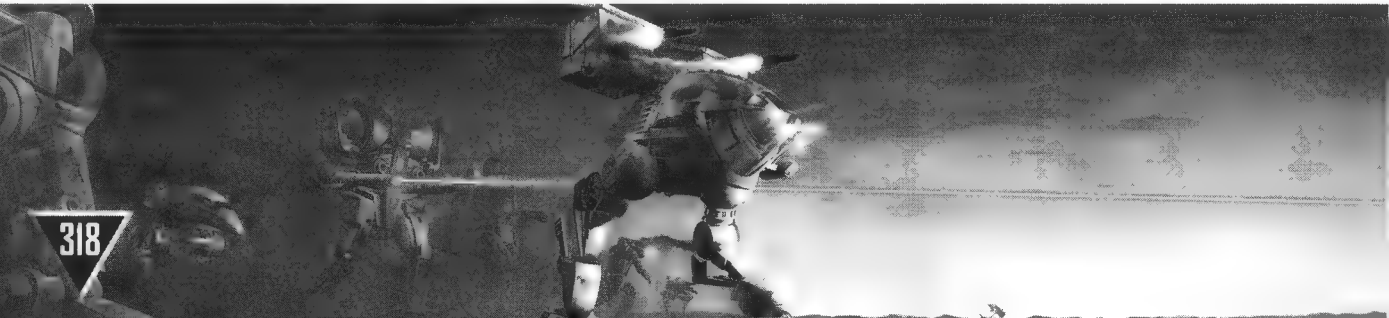
Figure 15-9. This dialog box lets you adjust how the unit behaves in the game world.

Once a unit has been placed on the map, you can double-click it to bring up the Unit Settings dialog box (Figure 15-9). This dialog box lets you adjust how the unit will behave.

Aside from allowing you to change the unit's alignment and variant, you can change the following:

- *Color.* Changes the appearance of the unit.
- *Pilot.* Select Green through Elite to adjust the skill of the pilot.
- *Orders.* Changes the unit's orders.
- *Parameters.* Lets you adjust how the unit moves and fights.

Of these selections, Orders and Parameters deserve extra attention.



Orders

Orders let you change how the unit behaves. Here's a look at how orders work.

- *Attack.* Default order. The unit attacks enemies that enter its Engage Radius (see Parameters.)
- *Sentry.* The unit attacks as usual, but if its enemy exits the Engage Radius or is destroyed, it returns to its starting point.
- *Guard.* Unit attacks enemies that enter the Engage Radius of the target structure. Use the ellipsis button to select which structure to guard, and the unit's Engage Radius setting to select how close enemies must be to the structure before the unit attacks.
- *Go To.* Unit moves to designated spot *after* the Delay time has elapsed. Enter a number (in seconds) in the Delay box to select Delay time, and use the ellipsis button to select a path for the unit to follow.
- *Patrol (Loop).* Unit patrols in a circular path assigned with ellipsis button. As with Go To, you can set a delay before the unit starts moving.
- *Patrol (Linear).* When the unit reaches the end of its patrol path, it turns around and walks the same path to the beginning.
- *Destroy Structure.* Unit moves to destroy a structure selected with ellipsis after a delay has elapsed.
- *Destroy Unit.* Unit moves to destroy a unit after the delay has elapsed.
- *Ambush.* The unit is shut down and does not appear on sensors until it engages its enemy.
- *Escort.* Unit follows another unit. The direction it maintains from the escorted unit is determined by a box called Relative Direction.
- *None.* Unit neither moves nor attacks. Good for creating a "pilot-less" unit.

The "Move and Fire" check box sometimes appears, depending on the order you've selected. If it's left unchecked, the unit will temporarily break away from its orders to attack enemies it encounters. If it's checked, on the other hand, the unit continues with its orders (say, to patrol a given route) despite the presence of enemies. It will fire at the enemy as it follows its orders but it won't deviate from its path.

Parameters

Parameters includes three selections: Engage Radius, Tactic, and Move Speed.

Engage Radius affects how close the players' units need to be before the unit attacks. Pick between Short (12.5 map tiles), Medium (28 map tiles), and Long (52 map tiles).

Tactic affects how the unit attacks. Most tactics, like Fire From Short, Flank Left, and Attack From Rear, are self-explanatory. Joust causes the unit to run or drive past the target while firing, then turn back for another run. Stop to Fire causes the unit to halt whenever it takes a shot. Move Speed affects whether the unit walks or runs.

Adjust Objectives

As with a multiplayer mission, you must adjust the player's objectives in a single-player mission. Think these objectives through and make sure the player can accomplish them. Also, note that you have the option of using objectives involving units (i.e. Destroy Units, Guard Units, Capture Units) in single-player missions.

Mission Design Tips

The tools to create a compelling mission are all in your hands. It's easy to make a mission that's functional; the tough part is making a mission that's genuinely good.

In single-player missions, always do your best to challenge, not overwhelm, the player. Make the enemy forces so potent that the player has no chance of winning simply by wading through the mission with no strategy at all. But simultaneously provide the player with the option to use strategy and thus, make things much easier. You can use several tricks to accomplish this:

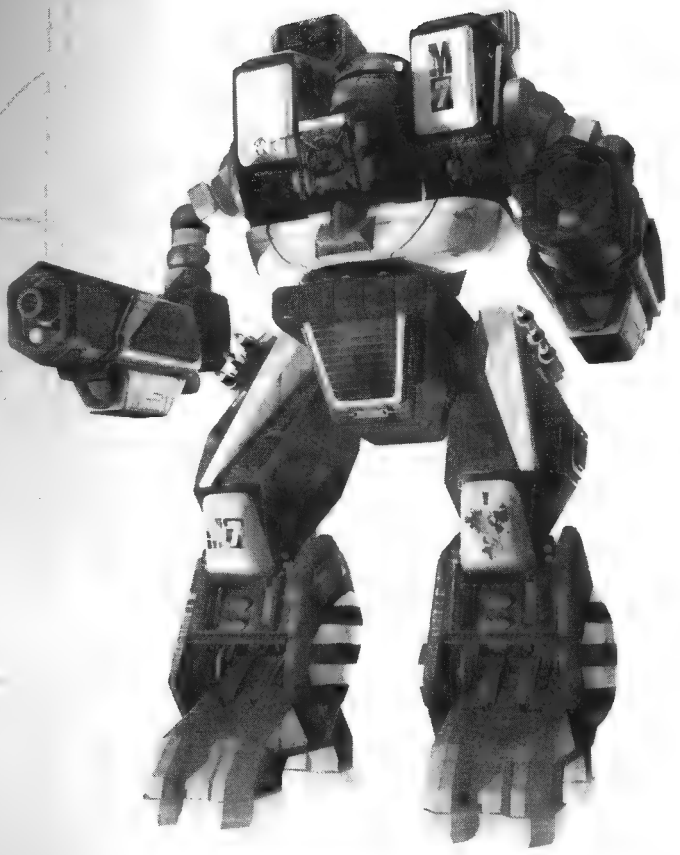
- Separate enemy units into clusters, so the player can take them out one cluster at a time. Then add Repair Bays so as to fix damaged 'Mechs between fights.
- Create enemy bases with tough defenses, but leave paths that a clever player can use to either avoid those defenses (say, by going around them), destroy them quickly (perhaps by climbing a hill that reveals a Turret Control, then artillery-striking it), or capture them (perhaps by sneaking a jump-capable 'Mech over a wall).
- Use patrols. The player then has to be careful not to engage the patrols while fighting non-patrolling units; that would be too many foes to fight at once.

- Use powerful but highly specialized enemies, like *Bulldog* tanks. These enemies are brutal at close range, but the player can deal with them easily by using fast 'Mechs and staying well away.

In multiplayer missions, be sure to set either identical objectives or mirrored objectives for each player. Make the map roughly symmetrical, and ensure that neither player has a distinct advantage over the other. For example, if each player is tasked with taking over the other's base, the mission will be unfair if one base is more heavily defended than the other.

The best suggestion though, is to play-test your creations extensively. Only by repeatedly playing a map will you discover whether it behaves the way you'd expected. Without play-testing, your missions will often be "broken." They might be too hard to beat, or too easy because of an unforeseen loophole, or unbalanced toward one side of the other (in the case of a multiplayer mission). Play the mission repeatedly and always consider how you can fix it or make it better.

The best way to test your multiplayer mission is to create the mission as a single-player mission. All you have to do is drop one enemy in a remote corner of the map. Now you can run around the multiplayer map like it's a solo mission and test the terrain and placement of objects by yourself. Next, select Multiplayer mission. When it asks if you want to load a saved map, select the mission you've created. Place drop zones for the two teams and save. Happy mission making!



CHAPTER 16
CHEAT CODES

If you want to use cheat codes during the game, you must first create a new file in the directory where you installed the game. Here's how:

1. Go into the directory where you installed the game. It's usually a subdirectory of the Microprose folder. You'll know you're in the right place if you see a file called *windows.fit*.
2. Right-click on *windows.fit* and select Copy from the pop-up menu.
3. Right-click somewhere else in this folder and select Paste from the pop-up menu. A new file will appear, called *Copy of windows.fit*.

4. Right-click on *Copy of windows.fit* and select Rename.
5. Rename the file *ixtlriimceourl.* That's i-x-t-l-r-i-i-m-c-e-o-u-r-l.

Cheats are now enabled. They'll remain enabled as long as the new file remains in this directory.

LOGISTICS CHEATS

Type in these cheats during the Logistics Phase (that is, *before* you actually launch your mission). There's no need to preface the cheats with anything, and you don't need to capitalize or punctuate. Just type the letters.

poundofflesh: Adds 1,000,000 Resource Points

rockandrollpeople: Removes Drop Weight Limit on current mission

mitchlovesyou: Repairs all 'Mechs in the 'Mech Bay

hereitcomes: Gives you one of each weapon and component in your player inventory

GAMEPLAY CHEATS

Type in these cheats while you're actually playing a mission. Note that you *can* type them in while the game is paused.

Control+Alt+W: Automatically wins the mission

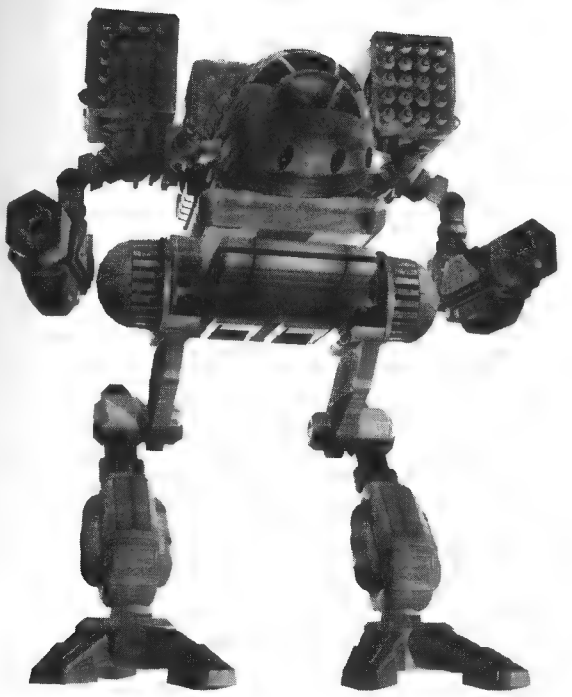
osmium: Makes your 'Mechs and vehicles invincible

lorrie: Repairs damaged armor/weapons

lordbunny: Gives you unlimited, near-instantaneous artillery strikes. Press b and left-click on the map to destroy a target

mineeyeshaveseentheglory: Reveals the entire map

Deadeye: Gives all your MechWarriors maximum Gunnery skill



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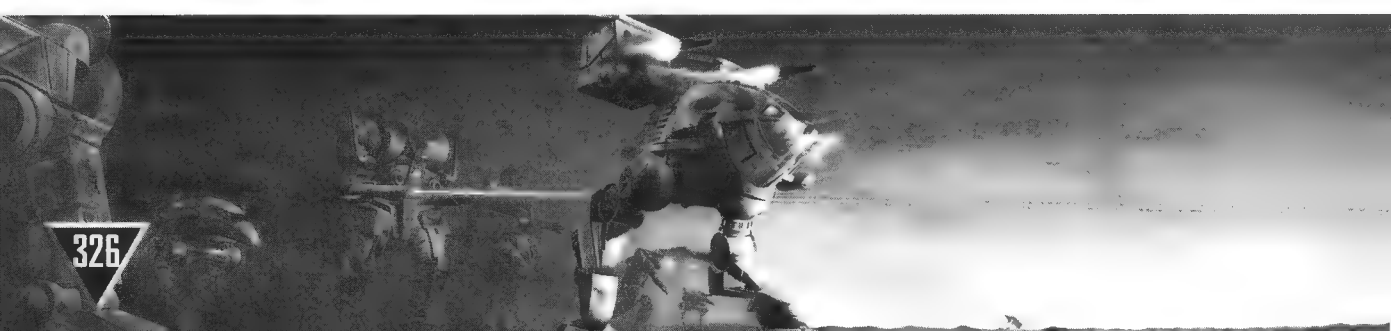

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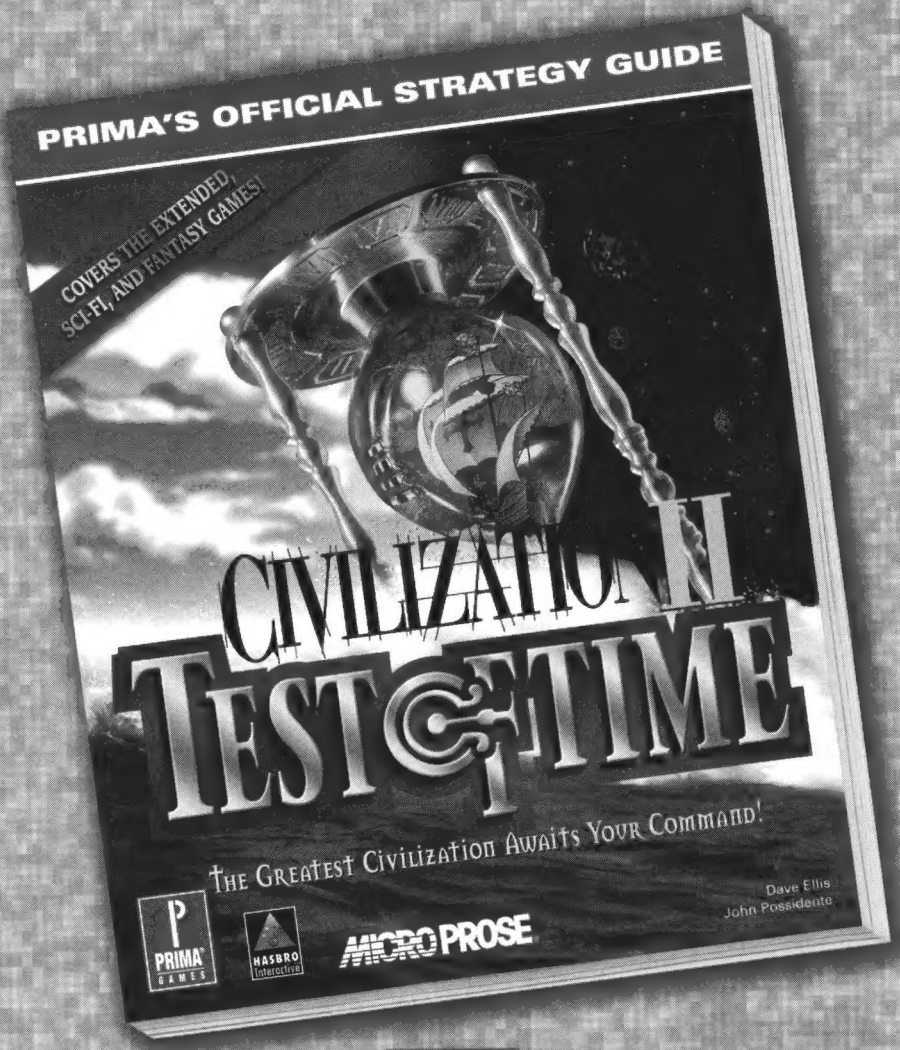

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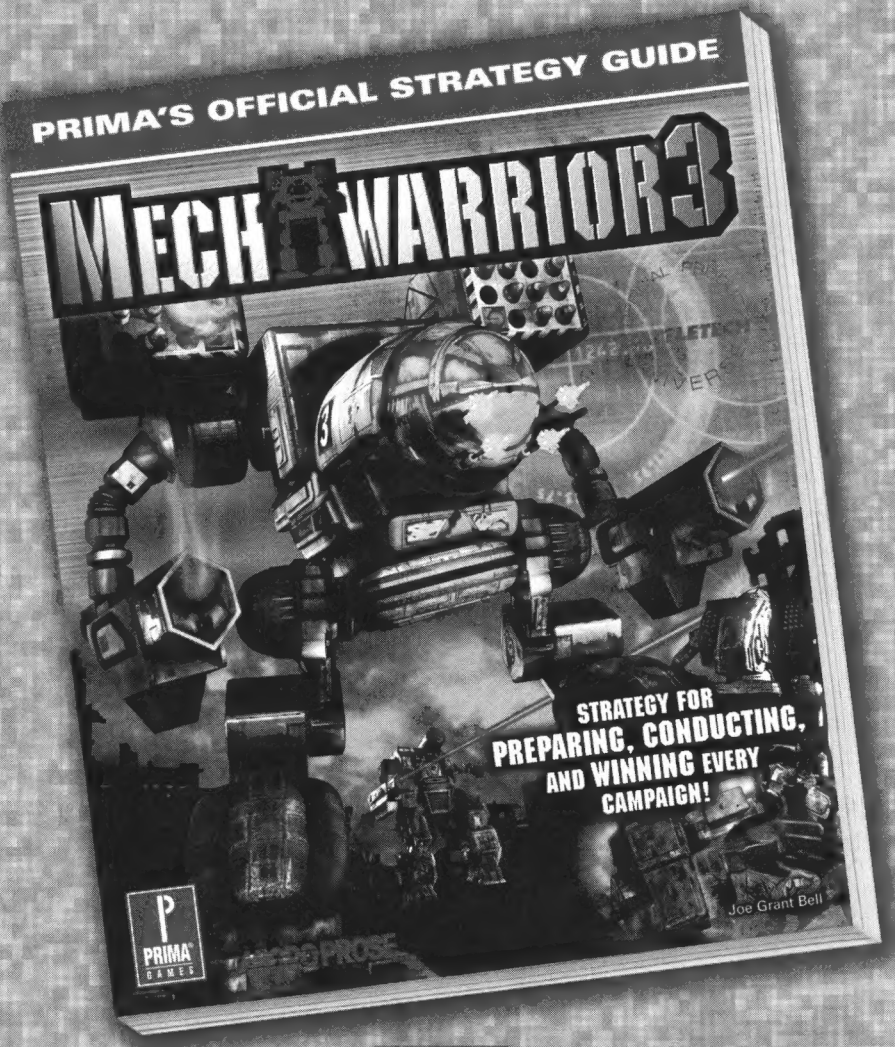

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